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REMINISCENCES OF  
GEORGIA BAPTISTS

BY

REV. S. G. HILLYER, D.D.

Author of "Manual of Bible Morality"

TOGETHER WITH

A STORY OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE

WRITTEN BY HIS DAUGHTER

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ATLANTA, GA.:  
FOOTE & DAVIES COMPANY  
PRINTERS AND BINDERS  
1902

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ALBION  
NEW YORK  
1902

## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

The first fourteen chapters of Part First of this book are made up of the "Reminiscences" written by the late Rev. S. G. Hillyer, for the *Christian Index*, and published between the dates August 13, 1896, and July 29, 1897.

The fifteenth chapter is made up of similar contributions, written at irregular intervals, also for the *Index*, and subsequent to the above series.

Part Second is the story of the author's life, written by his daughter. He left a brief outline of his professional life, covering four or five pages of manuscript, from which several extracts are taken, nearly in his own words. They refer to the changes he made from one school or pastorate to another, chiefly during the period from 1830 to 1845.

The "Reminiscences" were not intended to give a complete history of the Baptist denomination in Georgia, or of any individual. And, although they are of interest to many families in the State because of their personal character, the chief object of the writer seemed to be to cull from memory and from reliable testimony of others such incidents in the lives of the saints as might entertain, admonish, or instruct.

LOUISA C. HILLYER.

DECATUR, GA., July, 1902.





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PART FIRST.



# REMINISCENCES OF GEORGIA BAPTISTS.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### SECTION ONE.

#### THE EARLY BAPTIST CHURCHES OF GEORGIA.

THE people of Georgia were from their first settlement engaged for the most part in agriculture, and for that reason the great majority of them made their homes in the country.

The population of the State in 1820 was estimated at about three hundred thousand, exclusive of the Creek and Cherokee Indians, who at that time occupied a large portion of the territory within the limits of Georgia.

In the midst of these country homes, scattered here and there, were Baptist churches. The ministers who supplied them were generally farmers, like their neighbors. They relied chiefly upon the produce of their farms for the support of their families. Let us glance briefly at the status of our people at that early day.

In the rural settlements there was very little opportunity for education. Outside of the small towns that were built up around the court-houses in the several counties, the "old-field school" was almost the only seminary of learning to which the boys and girls of the neighborhood had access. The curriculum of those

schools was often no more than Webster's blue spelling-book, Pike's Arithmetic or the Federal Calculator, and daily exercises in penmanship. Such was the education to which the masses of the country people of that day were, for the most part, limited. And of course the members of the churches were no better provided for than the people generally. But they learned to read, to write, and to "cipher." And so far as church members were concerned, many of them became close readers of the Bible.

The Bible was to those earnest souls a lifetime text-book. They had no better sense, in their perfect exemption from any influence of the so-called "higher criticism," than to accept its teachings as divine truth; and it made them wise unto salvation. They loved the Bible.

The early Baptists of Georgia were sound in the faith. I can remember how clearly many of those plain people seemed to understand the doctrines of grace. They believed that Jesus has a people, secured to him by the gift of the Father, whose salvation is assured. They believed in the final preservation of the saints, in the necessity of the new birth accompanied with repentance and faith, as essential prerequisites of baptism and of church membership. And they were content with no other baptism than immersion.

I do not mean to say that there were no errors among them. It is true some did pervert the truth. They endeavored, *without knowing how to do it*, to push some of the truths which they held to their logical extent. The result was the development, here and there, of the spirit of antinomianism. And it is true this



error did for a time much harm. But considering the disadvantages under which the people lived in the early decades of this century, it is truly wonderful how Scriptural was the faith of the churches. They may well be regarded as, in a very great degree, a homogeneous people.

In those days church fellowship had a *meaning*. And because it had a meaning it exerted a visible influence upon the social life of the churches. They gave public expression of their fellowship by calling one another brother and sister. This sweet token of fellowship has in these latter days almost fallen into disuse. It still lingers in gatherings that are strictly religious, and it is heard also among our preachers; but it seems to have become unfashionable in the walks of social life. Of course this is a small matter as a mode of address; but its omission may, nevertheless, indicate a decay of Christian brotherhood.

Another mode of expressing their fellowship seventy years ago was found in their fondness for each other's company and for religious conversation. When Christians met at each other's houses they talked about the Bible—its precious promises and its great salvation—and then of their own experiences. I can recall many a scene in early life that would illustrate and verify what I have said. Christians did seem to me, in my boyhood days—and long afterward—to love one another. I tell you, reader, there was much to admire and to imitate in those churches of your fathers and your mothers.

I know they had some queer notions and some amusing ways, at which, from our standpoint, we may smile. I will give you a case in point.

When Brother Frank Callaway was called to ordination, away back in the twenties, one of the council that had met to perform the service was an old man. He had not yet adopted suspenders as a part of his toilet. He clung to the fashions that were in vogue when he was a young man, and therefore supported his pants by a band buttoned tight above his hips. He no doubt regarded suspenders as indicating a sinful conformity to the world. Well, the ceremony proceeded. Brother Callaway stood his examination successfully, and the council were ready to ordain him. But there was one dissenting voice—the old brother above mentioned. He had somehow found out that the candidate was wearing a pair of suspenders. (They were called “gallowses” in those days.) So he arose and said with great solemnity:

“Brethren, I can’t lay my hands upon *them gallowses.*” And the other members of the council had to proceed without him. Brother Callaway was ordained in spite of his suspenders, and lived for many years a humble but earnest worker in the Lord’s vineyard. And it affords me pleasure to add that he was one of the council which ordained to the gospel ministry my own beloved brother, Rev. John F. Hillyer, late of Texas.

Yes, we may smile at the severe conservatism of the old brother who would not lay hands on a pair of suspenders. But, after all, let us not forget that conservatism is often a virtue. There is such a thing as conformity to the world among our church members. Nay, it may, if not watched, creep into the forms of our own church services.

## SECTION TWO.

DANIEL MARSHALL—EDMOND BOTSFORD—JAMES  
MATHEWS.

In giving these reminiscences, let me say, once for all, I shall not limit myself to such things only as I can personally remember. I shall feel at liberty to speak of what I have found in our records or have learned from what I know to be reliable tradition.

I have spoken of the limited advantages of education which were accessible to the people of Georgia a hundred years ago. The want of these advantages our Baptist brethren suffered in common with their fellow citizens. But the Baptists, I told you, in spite of their humble learning, with the Bible as their only textbook, were sound in the faith. I spoke also of their earnest fellowship and how it gave a charm to their social life.

In the year 1771, Rev. Daniel Marshall, an ordained Baptist minister, originally from Connecticut, came into Georgia and settled on Kiokee Creek, in what is now Columbia County. He was not very learned, but he was a man of excellent sense, of deep piety, and he was a good preacher. He soon gathered the few Baptists in his neighborhood to his meetings, and in the spring of 1772 he organized them, with some others whom he had baptized, into a church, called after the name of the creek near which the meeting-house was built the Kiokee Church. This was the first Baptist church ever organized in Georgia.

In June, 1771, six months after Rev. Daniel Marshall settled near Kiokee Creek, another missionary entered the State. This was Mr. Edmond Botsford,

who was a native of England. He came into Georgia, however, from South Carolina. He was only a licensed preacher. As such, he had traveled and preached quite acceptably in Carolina, and, among other places, at Euhaw, a church on the Carolina side of the river about twenty-five miles below Augusta.

On the Georgia side of the Savannah River there was a group of Baptists who had associated into a society and had been recognized by the Euhaw Church as a branch. These brethren invited the young licentiate to come over and preach for them. This he did. The brethren were so much pleased with him that they persuaded him to remain with them for at least a year. Not long afterwards he was ordained by the church in Charleston and returned to his Georgia flock fully clothed with the functions of a Baptist minister.

His people built a log house for their religious services, which was long known as Botsford's Meeting-house. A church was soon organized, certainly not later than 1773. It is believed to have been the second Baptist church organized in Georgia.

Marshall and Botsford knew each other and worked harmoniously. They were about forty-five miles apart, one in Columbia County and the other in Burke. But neither limited his labors to one locality. They were practically missionaries. They preached far and wide, especially in middle and upper Georgia, as far as the white settlements extended. In this work they were aided by a few licensed preachers.

Now, foot up the account. In 1773, in the Colony of Georgia we find the Baptist denomination represented by two churches, two ordained ministers, per-

haps half a dozen licensed preachers, and less than two hundred Baptists in all the colony.

How stands the account to-day?

Without aiming to be exact, for I have not the recent statistics before me, it may be safely assumed that the Baptist denomination in Georgia is to-day represented by about one thousand two hundred ordained ministers, by one thousand six hundred organized churches, and, including the colored people, by at least three hundred thousand communicants. This is nearly one fifth the population of the Georgia of 1890.

To what is this amazing growth to be attributed?

First of all, let us gratefully acknowledge that it was due to the spirit of Christ that was with his people and especially with his ministering servants. The Spirit gave to the little band of ministers above mentioned an earnest faith and a self-sacrificing zeal in the Master's cause. It has already been noticed that Marshall and Botsford did not confine themselves to one locality. They preached throughout the country as they could find opportunity to do so. And their successors followed their example.

We can not fail to discern among our early ministers a genuine missionary spirit. Perhaps they did not know it, but they were practically missionaries. There were no societies or boards to direct their movements, or to provide for their expenses. They were self-appointed and self-sustained. Indeed, many of their pastorates afforded an opportunity for missionary work only. This kind of work may be illustrated by an example.

Some time between the years 1784 and 1800, Rev.

James Mathews, with his wife and one little baby child and a young colored girl, was living on a small farm in Lincoln County. He was serving a church in Burke County, more than fifty miles from his humble home. To reach his appointment he had to leave home on Friday afternoon, travel as far as he could till sundown, then put up for the night with some humble farmer like himself. Right there the traveler often found an opportunity to speak a word for Jesus. His kind host perhaps knew his guest to be a minister. If so, courtesy, if no higher feeling, would prompt him to ask his guest to conduct family worship. In such cases the preacher had his opportunity. His love of souls would find its gratification in a few words of instruction and exhortation; and thus he would become a messenger of mercy to the household. Brother Mathews knew how to improve such an opportunity.

But at sunrise he must be in the saddle, for he has yet many miles to travel before he can reach his church. He preaches on Saturday and holds conference. On Sunday he preaches to a large congregation gathered from the neighborhood. Many of them perhaps have come ten miles to attend his meetings. What is he but a missionary, sent of God, to preach the gospel to the destitute?

But what of the dear wife and little baby who were left in the sparsely settled wilds of Lincoln County? There was the young mother in her log-built home, with no near neighbors and, besides the baby, with no companion but the colored girl above mentioned. How must she have felt as night drew on? Well, she barred her door as best she could and committed her little household to God's kind care. The wolves howled

around her cabin; she could fancy they were coming into the yard. Such were the trials to which that good woman was subjected when her husband was out on his missionary excursions. How could she endure such trials?

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SECTION THREE.

MRS. REBECCA MATHEWS.

In 1838 or 1839, I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Mathews in Penfield. She was then in her eightieth year. We had a long and, to me, a delightful interview. She spoke of her early experiences, and especially of the trials above alluded to, and how she was enabled to bear them. She said, in substance, that at first, and for a considerable time, she felt very much dissatisfied with her condition. She thought her lot a hard one and murmured in her heart against it, feeling that it was not right for her to be left so much alone.

After a while it came to pass that her husband had an appointment about eight or ten miles from home, and it was arranged on that occasion that she should go with him to his meeting. The little one-horse farm wagon was fixed up for the occasion, and thus she was enabled to accompany her husband, a privilege which she perhaps had not before enjoyed. They reached the meeting-house safely.

The meeting proved to be one of great interest. Mr. Mathews preached with his usual fervor and the Spirit seemed to move the hearts of the people. The good lady looked on with wonder and delight. Her own religious feelings were deeply stirred. A re-



refreshing from the presence of the Lord had descended upon the people. The meeting closed with songs of praise, accompanied with tears of holy joy, and a handshaking that evinced the flow of Christian love and fraternal fellowship.

Such a scene Mrs. Mathews had never witnessed. Its effect upon her was to sweep away her discontent and all her murmurs. She returned to her humble home happy in the love of Jesus and glad that her husband was a preacher. At this point in her story, the dear old lady said to me, "From that hour I resolved to do all I could to promote my husband's work and to complain of my lot no more." And faithfully she kept her vow. She lived with her husband nearly half a century, and during those many years, till her sons were old enough to take her place, she, during her husband's absence, was the chief manager of things at home, and no murmur ever again escaped her lips.

But Mrs. Mathews was only one of a class of women who lived in those early days to help their husbands to do the Master's work. If we could know their history we should find there were other wives who had to endure seclusion, toil, and self-denial that their husbands might prosecute their itinerant labors far and wide through our sparsely settled country. We shall never know till we get to heaven how much we owe to those mothers in Israel for the growth of our denomination.

A word more about Brother Mathews. He lived to be very old. He continued to preach almost to the end of his life. During the last several years of his labor, he had become so feeble that it was deemed un-



safe for him to travel alone. He had become subject to frequent attacks of vertigo. They would come upon him without warning at any time and in any place. And yet he would try to fill his appointments. During this period, his daughter Rebecca would accompany her father to all his meetings, that she might be at hand to take care of him in case the vertigo should attack him. It happened once at any rate, and, if I am not mistaken, more than once, that the attack came upon him while in his gig on the highway. On such occasions, his daughter would assist him to the ground and lead him to the roadside and lay him down upon the leaves and watch by him till the fit passed off. What an example have we here of a daughter's faithful love!

“Some feelings are to mortals given,  
With less of earth in them than heaven;  
And if there be a human tear  
From passion's dross refined and clear,  
A tear so limpid and so meek,  
It would not stain an angel's cheek,  
'Tis that which pious fathers shed  
Upon a duteous daughter's head!”

Such a daughter was Rebecca Mathews.

Brother Mathews died about 1827 or 1828. He was the father of eight children—five sons and three daughters. Two of his sons, Philip and James, were Baptist ministers. They lived to do much work in the Master's vineyard. But they and their brothers and sisters have all passed away. Their descendants, however, may be found in different parts of the State. Brother Aquilla Mathews of Atlanta, is

now (1896), I believe, the oldest living grandson of the venerable preacher.

In reading these reminiscences, many will be content if they find in them entertaining stories. My dear brethren and sisters, the incidents themselves are of very small importance. I hope they may prove interesting to you, but don't forget that their chief value must be looked for in the lessons which they teach.

We profess to have the same religion that cheered the hearts and inflamed the zeal of the fathers and mothers of our Baptist people. And it is the religion that can be traced back through nearly nineteen centuries to the day of Pentecost.

This religion began to be corrupted very soon. Even the Apostles found it necessary to warn the churches against heretics and anti-Christ. As time passed on, the heresies increased till at length were developed the mighty hierarchies of the Eastern and Western churches—one having its head at Constantinople, and the other at Rome.

But in spite of these colossal powers, there were local churches here and there throughout Europe who would not submit to the supremacy of either. Many of these held to the faith once delivered to the saints. Their history is written in fire and blood. They contended for an open Bible, for soul-liberty and for the independence of the churches. They repudiated the union of Church and State and denied the usurped authority of bishops and prelates. Moreover, they denied the doctrines of baptismal regeneration, of sacramental grace and of priestly absolution. I can not mention every item of faith that separated them from the Greek and Latin churches. It must suffice to say

that in those dissenting and independent bodies of Christians, we can find the sentiments which to-day distinguish the Baptist denomination.

I have alluded to these facts that we may more justly appreciate the self-denying labors of our own Baptist fathers in the State of Georgia. Animated by their example, let us consider whether *we* are doing our duty as their successors. True, we have grown from two ordained ministers and a hundred and fifty communicants to more than a thousand ministers and three hundred thousand communicants; but is the work finished? Have we won the victory? Remember, while our churches have multiplied, and our membership has grown to a vast multitude, our State population has increased in equal if not in a larger proportion. I think Brother Gibson's statistics would show that there are still many thousands of people in Georgia who seldom hear a gospel sermon. No, the victory is not won. Oh, our people need to feel more deeply the claims of Christ upon them for their money and time, as well as for their prayers!

## CHAPTER II.

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### SECTION ONE.

#### CONVENTION OF 1829.

IN 1829 the Georgia Baptist Convention met in Milledgeville. It was my good fortune to be present on that occasion, not, however, as a delegate; for I was not then even a church member. Nevertheless it has ever been a source of pleasure to me that I had the opportunity of being near that Convention—so signalized in the history of Georgia Baptists.

I was, with many others, the guest of Doctor Boykin, the father of Rev. Samuel Boykin and his brother, Rev. Thomas C. Boykin. In Doctor Boykin's house I had the pleasure of meeting some of the leading men of the Convention and hearing them talk. Doctor Sherwood and Doctor Mercer were there. These I had known before. In their tours of preaching through the State they had sometimes been entertained at our humble home. Another distinguished man whom I met was Rev. James Shannon, at that time pastor of the Baptist church in Augusta.

With the exception of these three, I knew personally only four or five of the delegates present.

The Convention held its sessions in the State Arsenal, while preaching was provided for every morning and night. By the courtesy of the Methodist brethren, these services were held in their meeting-house, because it could accommodate a larger audience than the Baptist house. And it was also convenient to the place where the Convention had to meet. The con-

gregations were very large and the preaching was excellent. Mr. Shannon and Mr. H. O. Wyer, from Savannah, especially, made a profound impression upon the people. It was difficult to say which of them was the greater.

The matter which most deeply engaged the attention of the Convention was the Penfield legacy. The history of this legacy is given so fully in our records that it is hardly necessary to repeat it here. Nevertheless, for the sake of many who may not have had access to the records it may be useful to state briefly the facts.

Deacon Josiah Penfield, of Savannah, had recently died. In his will he had bequeathed twenty-five hundred dollars to the Georgia Baptist Convention, to be devoted to the cause of ministerial education among our young men in Georgia, on condition that the Convention would raise an equal sum to be added to it for the same purpose.

To meet this condition and thus to secure the legacy was the problem that confronted the Convention of 1829. And nobly did they meet it. But there is a small inaccuracy in the account of this case, as given in the "History of Georgia Baptists," compiled for the *Index* in 1881, which deserves to be noticed.

In that account we are told how the twenty-five hundred dollars were raised. It gives twenty-six names with the amount subscribed by each one. But when we add up the several subscriptions as given, the aggregate is only twenty-four hundred and fifty dollars, instead of twenty-five hundred—the sum required to secure the legacy. The question at once occurs: Whence came the other fifty dollars? I think I can answer that question.

Though not a member of the Convention, yet I was in the midst of many Baptists, all of whom were interested in what was going on at the Arsenal. Hence I learned some things about the doings of the Convention from the conversation of those around me. I think it was near the close of the Convention when some one in the parlor, at Doctor Boykin's house, announced to the company that Mr.\* Mercer had saved the Penfield legacy. The parties present were evidently much pleased.

As I understand the case it was about this way: The committee appointed to see what could be done towards raising the twenty-five hundred dollars, after as thorough a canvass as they thought it worth while to make, reported the subscriptions. When added up, however, it was found that the aggregate fell below the required amount. What was to be done? There were perhaps a few moments of disappointment. Brother Mercer, however, relieved the situation by adding to his subscription the whole of the deficit, and thus completed the required amount.

The above is the version of the story which I have all these years held to be the correct one. I have often spoken of it to groups of brethren, and I have never heard it disputed. I am persuaded, therefore, that it is substantially correct. And if so, it is certainly due to the memory of Doctor Mercer that it should not be forgotten.

There were twenty-six subscribers, it seems, to that twenty-five hundred dollars. This gives an average of a little over ninety-six dollars to each one. That was

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\*NOTE.—Dr. Campbell says that the degree of D.D. was conferred upon Mr. Mercer by Brown University; but his intimate friends seldom used the title, knowing it would not be agreeable. Thus it is naturally dropped when he is spoken of in a familiar way. For similar reasons the title is sometimes omitted, in this work, in the case of other brethren.—EDITOR.

a liberal subscription for only twenty-six people to make. And great has been the result of that day's work in the Convention of 1829.

That twenty-five hundred dollars secured the Penfield legacy. Every man's dollar was worth two; for when the legacy and the subscriptions were united, the Convention had in hand a fund of five thousand dollars devoted to the education of ministers. That five thousand dollars was a God-given boon to the Baptists of Georgia. It quickened into some degree of life the zeal of our people for the improvement and elevation of our ministry. Like a seed dropped into good ground, that fund began to grow, and is still growing—slowly, it may be, but it is still growing—and we hope ere long to see it expand into a magnificent endowment for Mercer University.

But let us never forget that the first design of the fund of 1829 was to promote ministerial education. This design is the glory of our beloved University. In spite of its limited resources, during the first forty-one years of its life, counting from 1833, it educated a hundred and twenty preachers. If to these be added those who have been educated in like manner during the succeeding twenty-two years, the number would probably reach nearly two hundred. Such are some of the fruits of that little seed that was planted in 1829.

Now, brethren, the object of these reminiscences is not merely to gratify our sentimental feelings for things that are passed, but it should be to gather, from the example of our fathers, fuel to kindle our zeal, in the same great work, up to flaming enthusiasm. That fund which Penfield started, as I have already said, has been growing; but, compared with the sublime end



we have in view, it is still far short of what is needed. Mercer University was consecrated by its founders to the glory of our great Redeemer, and she is now stretching out her hands imploringly to every Baptist in Georgia for help to accomplish that glory. She is asking you, now, for only one hundred thousand dollars. This would be only one dollar apiece for one hundred thousand Baptists. Only see how easily the sum might be raised.

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## SECTION TWO.

JESSE MERCER.

My recollections of Doctor Mercer reach back to my early boyhood. His name was a household word in our home, and he was well acquainted with my parents long before I was capable of knowing his worth or appreciating his character. Nevertheless, the way in which I heard him spoken of by the older people impressed me very deeply—I thought of him as somehow superior to the common order of men.

I can distinctly remember my feelings the first time I heard him preach. I was still a young boy, but old enough to know that I had no religion, and my carnal heart made me really somewhat afraid to hear Mr. Mercer preach. So I quietly concluded that I would not attend his appointment. But when the day came and the other members of the family were getting ready to start to the meeting, my mother said to me, as if she suspected my intention, "Granby, I want you to go with us to hear Mr. Mercer to-day." I replied that I preferred to stay at home. She seemed a little perplexed, and giving me a searching look, as if she would read my thoughts, she said, "I know the reason



you do not wish to go. You are afraid you will be converted." It was a home thrust. I parried it as well as I could, rather awkwardly I confess; but in compliance with her wishes I went with the family to hear Mr. Mercer—the man whom I had almost dreaded. Well, I heard the sermon, but I was not converted, for my foolish heart was darkened. His sermon, I suppose, was what his pious auditors expected it to be, but my state of mind rendered me incapable of appreciating it. Little did I then think that the time would come when I should sit without fear or dread and listen to him with delight as he expounded the riches of Divine grace through the crucified Redeemer. Thanks be to God, through that grace, such a time did come.

Doctor Mercer's preaching was sometimes expository, sometimes argumentative, but always instructive. His style was remarkably simple, but clear and forcible. His thoughts were rich and glowing, so that they seemed to lift his simple diction up to the realm of sublimity, evinced by the rapt attention of his hearers and the abiding effect of his discourses.

I witnessed a scene that would illustrate the sketch just given if I could only describe it. It was in 1836, in the town of Forsyth. There had gathered a large number of Baptist ministers, for the purpose of trying to bring about a better feeling between the missionary and anti-missionary Baptists. Brother Mercer was the moderator of that meeting. In order to convince the anti brethren that they misunderstood the views of missionary Baptists, a free discussion of the doctrines of grace, especially the doctrine of election, was allowed. Several speakers took part in the discussion. The interest in it was extreme. At length Doctor Mercer

was called on to give his views. Leaving the moderator's chair he walked down the aisle a few steps, that he might be in the midst of his hearers, and began to talk. His theme was God's electing love.

I was then but a stripling in the ministry. My theology was in its formative state. I had quietly accepted the doctrine of election, because it seemed to be taught in the Scriptures, but it had given me some trouble. I therefore paid profound attention. I can not, at this late day, give an analysis of his discourse, but his argument developed this conclusion: That the human heart being as it is—at enmity with God and dead in trespasses and in sins, no sinner without electing grace would ever accept the gospel. As he reached this conclusion the venerable speaker was deeply affected. Looking up for a moment he said with much emotion, "This is all my hope!" and burst into tears. The effect was electrical, people all about the house were wiping their eyes.

The effect upon myself was wonderful. All my trouble about the doctrine of election was relieved. Not that I was able to comprehend it in all its depths, but I was able to see that, human nature being as it is, electing love *must be*, if any are saved, an essential element in the great scheme of human salvation. True, in the application of this electing grace are mysteries which we can not *now* explain. Why the great Father should choose some, and not all, or why he should choose one, and not another, we know not; but we do know that he is infinitely wise and good, and therefore with profound confidence in his perfect rectitude, we can say from our hearts, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Doctor Mercer's social qualities were such as to make him a most interesting conversationalist. Though strong in his will and firm in his purpose, yet he was never overbearing or abrupt in his speech, but always gentle and respectful to those around him. He sat among them as if he were one of them, apparently unconscious of his influence over his associates, who were willing to be silent that they might hear him talk.

In this connection it may not be out of place to mention an interview which I had with Brother Mercer only a few years before his death. It was in Macon. A meeting was in progress or had just closed. It happened that I and two or three others met Brother Mercer at the house where we dined. In the afternoon a little circle was gathered on the veranda, with him as the center of it. I wish I could report all the words that fell from his lips on that occasion, but that is impossible at this late day. I remember, however, his telling us an incident in his own experience, many years before, when he was on a preaching tour through the destitute regions of Northeast Georgia.

It was usual in those days for two ministers to go together on such excursions. Brother Mercer had with him on the occasion referred to Rev. Thomas Rhodes, who was an able preacher and at that time very popular.

One of their appointments was far up among the mountains. They knew not the place, nor did they know the people. Their aim was to preach the gospel to those who were almost destitute of it. When they reached the place they found no meeting-house—it was literally in the wood. But the people had made preparations for them as well as they could. They had

cleaned a large space by removing the underbrush and cutting off such lower branches of the trees as were in the way. Rough seats, made chiefly of logs, were also provided, and last of all they had prepared a neat stand for the preacher. This was covered over with boards so that the preachers, at least, might be sheltered. These facts indicate that there were, around that far-off mountain, some who were eager to hear the gospel. And accordingly that grove was filled with a large congregation.

The preachers took their places on the stand. But as they looked out beyond the audience they discovered a dark and angry cloud rising high above the horizon. The people sat looking towards the stand. The cloud was behind them. They seemed not to have noticed it. After a brief consultation, the preachers agreed to leave it to the people whether they would prefer to risk the rain and hear the preaching or give up the preaching and seek shelter in the nearest houses. They said if the preachers were willing, they preferred to risk the storm and have the preaching.

Accordingly the services were opened. On such occasions both ministers were expected to preach; "and," said Brother Mercer to the little circle in the veranda, "at that time we were both long winded." So a two hours' service, at least, was before them. The leading brother had hardly gotten fairly under way when the rain began. It came down in a steady, copious, protracted shower. But there was no confusion in the audience. When thoroughly drenched, they rose quietly to their feet and stood with outstretched necks and with their eyes fixed upon the speaker. The clouds at length passed over, and the meeting was closed. It

was but a part of that itinerant labor which in the early decades of the century filled Northeast Georgia with Baptist churches.

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SECTION THREE.

ADIEL SHERWOOD.

I saw Doctor Sherwood first at our home, but I was too young to know who or what he was. I only learned that he was a preacher and that his name was Sherwood. He was then a stranger in Georgia. He was a native of Vermont, a graduate of Middleburg College and also of the Theological Seminary at Andover.

It was with such preparation that Doctor Sherwood entered upon his work in Georgia. He gave to our State the best part of a long life. The history of that life is on record. And a more instructive and useful history for Georgia Baptists can hardly be found.

It was about 1824 that Doctor Sherwood was a second time a guest at my mother's home. I was then old enough to know him and in some small measure to appreciate him. It was easy enough to see that my mother and grandmother (our father had passed away) were deeply interested in his conversation. He was decidedly the most learned Baptist preacher they had ever known; yet, though so far above them in learning, they discovered that in the realm of experimental religion he spoke a language which they well understood. And if he spoke of the need of missionary work among the Indians upon our borders, or among the distant heathen where Judson was, his words found a ready echo from their hearts.

Nor was he unmindful of my mother's sons. I was then about fifteen years old. I remember he took oc-

casation to address a few words to me. He asked me what I was reading in Latin. I told him I was reading Virgil. And, looking at me with a pleasant smile, he said: "And where did you first find Tityrus?" I replied: "I found him reclining under the shade of a beech-tree." The answer seemed to please him, and I felt gratified by his attention.

At the same time, or in a subsequent interview, my brother Junius had a similar experience. My brother was two years older than I, and of course more advanced in his work. Doctor Sherwood drew him out as to his studies. The conversation culminated in my brother's reading to him a composition he had just finished. The good doctor was evidently pleased with the youthful effort. Yet with a gentleness almost parental, he criticized the diction in two or three sentences and suggested amendments. My brother at once and with pleasure accepted his suggestions, and afterwards gave evidence of his gratification in having Doctor Sherwood to criticize his composition.

Such incidents as just given may appear to some readers too trifling to deserve remembrance; but simple as they are, they teach us a valuable lesson. In just such incidents we learn how Doctor Sherwood was able, perhaps unconsciously to himself, to work his way into the affections of the families which he visited.

Let me give you another simple story. It was given to me by one who claimed to know the facts.

On one occasion Brother Sherwood was riding through a rural district. His road led him by a house where dwelt a family with which he was well acquainted. He concluded to drop in and greet the

household. He found, however, that the husband and father of the family was out in the fields superintending his work. The time was too short to make it worth while to send for him. So the visit was limited to the members of the family who were present.

The lady of the house was deeply pious and greatly concerned about her husband, who was not a member of the church and seemed to be unconcerned about his salvation. Brother Sherwood understood the situation. The case seemed to touch his heart, for just before he left he made prayer with the family. A part of it was an earnest and feeling supplication in behalf of the unconverted husband. He then took leave of all present and went on his way.

About twilight the husband came in from the field. His wife met him and told him of Doctor Sherwood's visit and of the earnest prayer which he had made for the salvation of the husband. What reply he made I can not now report; but it came to pass, in a few weeks, that this man presented himself to the Baptist church in his neighborhood as a candidate for baptism.

As he told his experience it was made to appear that on the day of Brother Sherwood's visit, and, as near as could be ascertained, about the same hour, he was resting for a little while under the shade of a tree that happened to be in the field. While musing there, suddenly, he knew not why or how, the thought of his ungodly life occurred to him. It came with such power that he could not shake it off. He felt that he was a sinner. When he met his wife in the evening and heard the story of Doctor Sherwood's visit and of his earnest prayer for him, his religious feelings were



greatly intensified. He sought the Lord, and in a few days, in the quiet of his own home, he was enabled to rejoice in the hope of heaven. Brother Sherwood's prayer was answered. And his example illustrates the worth of pastoral visiting.

I could fill pages with such incidents as the foregoing in his life. They reveal to us what may be called the private and for the most part, the unseen labors of this godly man among his brethren, in which his sole aim was to leave a blessing behind him in every household.

I will now relate an incident of a more public kind. It occurred at the ministers' meeting at Forsyth in 1836, of which I have already spoken.

Among the resolutions presented to that body was one designed, if possible, to promote reconciliation and fellowship among the brethren. In the heat of controversy about missions, hard words had been spoken, and bad feelings, here and there, had been excited. The resolution alluded to these facts in terms of regret, and proposed that all should forgive, and seek to be forgiven, in the spirit and in the way that Jesus had pointed out. Such, I think, was about the meaning of the resolution. It was passed and if my memory is not at fault, without a dissenting voice.

It was then that Brother Sherwood, standing in front of the audience, said: "Brother Moderator, I propose that we begin right now, and here, to comply with the terms of this resolution; and I am willing to be the first to do it. I know there have been hard feelings between a brother who sits before me [calling his name] and myself. If I ever hurt his feelings, I am sorry for it, and I ask his forgiveness and am



willing to give him my hand." The brother alluded to rose promptly, and coming forward, grasped the extended hand, and the bond of fellowship was restored. It was a scene which angels might rejoice to behold, and it was an example which all would do well to follow.

To strangers Doctor Sherwood had the appearance of being stern; but, though possessed of a strong will, he had in him "the milk of human kindness." He was devoted to Sunday-schools, to temperance, to missions, and to ministerial education. I remember hearing him say that there was a time when he determined that he would not have a permanent home for himself till he should see steps taken to provide some way for the education of young ministers in Georgia. This was away back in the twenties. After waiting, and seeing no other prospect, he procured a home and opened upon his own premises a theological school. He soon gathered round him a group of students who paid their expenses, in part at least, by working on the farm. But as soon as Mercer Institute was established, he promptly gave up his own enterprise and threw his whole influence in favor of the new institution. He saw at last the accomplishment of what had been his aim and his hope for Georgia Baptists.

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SECTION FOUR.

JAMES SHANNON.

As already stated, I first met Mr. Shannon at the Convention of 1829, in Milledgeville. I had, however, but little opportunity at that time to become personally acquainted with him. But I heard him talk, and I could not fail to observe the respect and affection with

which he was regarded by those who had previously known him.

In 1831, it came to pass that I had a better opportunity of becoming acquainted with him. He was then professor of languages in Franklin College—now the State University—and also the pastor of the Baptist church in Athens, Georgia. Though not yet a member of the church, I often attended his ministry.

When Mr. Shannon entered upon his duties as a professor in the college, there was no Baptist church in Athens. There were a few Baptists, but their membership was in a church two miles from town. Mr. Shannon at once went to work among those scattered sheep, and within the year 1830 he was able, by the blessing of God, to organize them into a church and to see them settled in their own house of worship. He of course was elected pastor of the little flock.

In the spring of 1831 there was a wonderful revival of religion in Athens. It extended to all the churches that were then in the town. The number of those who professed conversion probably exceeded a hundred. Much the larger part of them, it is true, joined the Methodists or Presbyterians, for the Baptist church was scarcely a year old, and for thirty years there had been no regular Baptist preaching in Athens, till Professor Shannon introduced it the year before. Nevertheless some of the converts united with his flock. On June 12, 1831, he had the pleasure of baptizing eleven young converts, of whom it was my precious privilege to be one. The baptisms were administered in the Oconee River. A large crowd was present to witness the scene. After the usual devotional exercises Brother Shannon led the candidates, one by one, into

the water and there baptized them, upon a profession of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It was a day which I have never forgotten. Nor shall I ever forget the dear man who led me into that baptismal water. As we were walking out into the stream he said to me in a gentle voice, "Look to Jesus." Only three words, but they have lingered in my memory for sixty-five years, and they have been my comfort in many a dark and trying hour through the years that have passed since that sweet epoch in my life's history. The scene was very impressive. It was an object-lesson well calculated to teach many of the spectators who were Pedobaptists, the way of the Lord more perfectly, if they would only heed it.

It is now in order to speak of Brother Shannon's antecedents. What I shall say I received chiefly from his own lips during the years he was my pastor.

He was a native of Ireland. His parents were Presbyterians, and as was natural, he accepted their faith. At an early age he was enabled to hope for salvation through faith in Jesus. Very soon, under the light of this new hope, he became anxious to be educated, and his father at once took steps to gratify his desire. In due time he graduated at Belfast College in his native country, and was soon made a minister in the Presbyterian Church.

About the time that he had completed his preparations, Mr. Shannon met a good opportunity to find employment in our country. He embraced it, and came to Sunbury, in Liberty County, of this State. He came to take charge of the Sunbury Academy, which at that

time was a famous school, patronized by many people living along the seaboard of Georgia. This gave him position at once with all the people. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists, especially, received him with great cordiality. They were, at that period, about the year 1820, quite numerous in the seaboard counties. Hence Mr. Shannon started to work in his new field of labor with fine prospects before him.

Now it happened that there was a Baptist church at Sunbury, of which some of the most prominent citizens were members. But the Baptist cause was then weak in that section of the State. Mr. Shannon had not known much about the Baptists while in his native land, but in Sunbury he was brought face to face with them. He could not fail to notice that their pastor, Rev. C. O. Screven, was an able man and that some of his own patrons were members of the Baptist church. But Mr. Shannon did not, at first, look with favor upon the sect which, no doubt, he had often heard spoken against from his very childhood. He soon undertook, at the request of his Pedobaptist brethren (if my memory is not at fault the request came from the Presbytery of that section), to write a pamphlet designed to prove the validity of infant baptism and of sprinkling as its mode.

He entered upon the task with great assurance that he would easily sweep away the foundations of our Baptist faith. But it happened to him as it had happened to many others who had tried the same experiment. He failed to find anywhere in the New Testament a single trace of infant baptism, and his classical learning enabled him to see that "baptizo," when literally used, can never be represented in Eng-

lish by either "sprinkle" or "pour." The result was that in a few months Mr. Shannon presented himself to the Baptist church at Sunbury as a candidate for baptism. He was received and was baptized by the pastor, who, if I mistake not, was Rev. Charles O. Screven. In due time he was ordained to the ministry in the Baptist church.

Brother Shannon's rise in the denomination was rapid. He soon became known as a scholar, a teacher, and as a very strong and forcible preacher. In a few years he was called to Augusta. There he became principal of the Academy and also served the Baptist church as its pastor. His fame was wide-spread through the denomination.

Now it was from Augusta that he was called to the chair of ancient languages in the State College. And I have already given an account of his career in Athens.

His fame passed beyond the limits of Georgia. In 1835 he received a call to become the president of a college in Louisiana. This he accepted, and left Athens in the autumn of that year. He had remained in Louisiana only a few years when he was offered the presidency of the University of Missouri. This post he held till the close, or near the close, of his life.

It is perhaps proper to complete this brief notice of Brother Shannon by stating that after he left Georgia he very soon identified himself with the followers of Alexander Campbell, and was thus lost to the Baptist denomination. This was indeed greatly deplored by all his brethren in Georgia who had known him. But there is no doubt about the genuineness of his piety; and, if I get to heaven, I feel assured that I shall meet him there.

## CHAPTER III.

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### SECTION ONE.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, MAY 8-12, 1845.

THE organization of the Southern Baptist Convention was an epoch in the history of the Southern Baptists. The cause which led to it is clearly set forth in our records. But the antecedents of that cause are not so well known by the present generation. Hence it may be well to allude to some of those antecedents.

For more than a score of years, the anti-slavery sentiment, among the Northern people of our country, had been steadily growing and becoming more and more intense and aggressive. The religious press and pulpit indulged in severe invectives against slavery and slave-holders. In this hostility to slavery the Baptists of the North generally shared. But, for a long time, no overt action of hostility was taken by any official body of Northern Baptists which seemed to call for any counter-action on the part of the South.

At length, however, such a case did come. The Board of Missions of the Triennial Baptist Convention, including in its constituency all the Missionary Baptists of the South, refused to accept as a missionary a worthy brother from the South, on the ground that he was a slave-holder. Due remonstrance was made against this action by intelligent brethren, but to no avail—the Board adhered to its refusal. This fact soon became known throughout the South; and this

was the cause that led to the great convocation of Southern Baptists at Augusta in May, 1845.

The number of delegates enrolled must have exceeded three hundred. They included many of the most able and best men found among our Southern Baptists. All were deeply impressed with the responsibilities that they were about to assume. A deep Christian spirit pervaded the deliberations of the body. The result of their deliberations was the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention.

They closed their work with a manifesto addressed to Baptist brethren throughout the United States, explaining the origin, the principles, and the objects of their action in forming the Southern Baptist Convention. This document speaks for itself and deserves to be held in perpetual remembrance by every Southern Baptist.

I had a personal acquaintance with only a very few of the delegates who came from other States. But I was well acquainted with many of the members who represented our own State. Among these I may mention Honorable Wilson Lumpkin. He was one of Georgia's historical characters. He was first a member of Congress, then governor of our State, and lastly he was for six years a senator of the United States. I was, at one time, his pastor. He was attentive to the interests of the church, and proved himself to be a wise counselor in all its movements.

Another Georgia delegate was Doctor J. L. Dagg, at that time president of Mercer University. He was a native of Virginia. In his early manhood he served his country as a soldier. The force to which he belonged occupied the city of Baltimore at the time that



the British fleet was bombarding Fort McHenry. He was an eye-witness of that terrific scene; and the account which he gave to me of that bombardment verified the glowing description given of it in our national song, "The Star-spangled Banner." But Doctor Dagg was not long a soldier in an earthly war. He soon laid aside his carnal weapons, and clad in "the whole armor of God" he went forth to do battle against the Powers of Darkness for the glory of our great Immanuel; and many a trophy did he lay at the Master's feet.

Doctor Dagg was pre-eminently distinguished for the dignity of his manners. He impressed all who approached him with profound respect. I never had the pleasure of hearing him preach, for I did not know him till after he had lost his voice. But as a conversationalist I never knew his superior. He was cheerful but never light. Without the least ostentation, his words were words of wisdom. Hence he was a wise and safe counselor, and his influence over those with whom he associated was almost oracular. He loved the Bible and his mind glowed with the light of its revelations.

Of the brethren from other States, I had the pleasure of meeting Brother J. L. Burrows. He came as "a corresponding delegate from the American Baptist Publication Society and the Pennsylvania Baptist Convention, and was invited to participate with us." He was the father of our gifted brother, Dr. Lansing Burrows, now pastor of the Baptist church in Augusta. In representing the Publication Society, Brother J. L. Burrows made an earnest speech in its behalf. The speech was followed by some discussion in which several of the delegates took part, notably, Professor



P. H. Mell, Dr. J. B. Jeter, and Judge Junius Hillyer. Brother Burrows had expressed the desire that the Convention would not withdraw its support and patronage from the Publication Society. No action, however, was taken at that time either for or against the American Baptist Publication Society. So the Minutes fail to mention the discussion.

Some time in the seventies I saw Brother Burrows again, at a meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans. He had then identified himself with the South and, I think, was a delegate from Virginia. I had the pleasure of hearing him speak. His text was: "Why stand ye here, all the day, idle? They say unto him, because no man hath hired us." (Matt. xx. 6-7.)

He used the text to illustrate the condition of many church members who are idle as to church work, not because they are unwilling to render service, but simply because they have failed to find any opportunity to do it—no man hath hired them. So they stand, like laborers in a market-place, waiting for a job. He then showed, with great force, the duty of pastors to go out and hunt up these idle ones and find for them some department of work suited to each one's gifts, where he may render some profitable service to the Master. The sermon was practical and very instructive. I have never forgotten it. He is a wise pastor who knows how to utilize the moral forces of his people.

As already stated, the Convention had its origin in the action of our Northern brethren towards us in refusing to accept as a missionary a Southern brother because he was a slave-holder. This cause of separation has passed away, but time and experience have

developed other reasons that now justify the continuance of the Southern Baptist Convention.

It was organized that we might more effectually combine our Southern churches in the propagation of the gospel at home and in foreign lands. Subsidiary to this primary work, we have found it needful, in addition to the other Boards, to establish a Sunday-school Board, to promote by its influence and its literature the training of our young people in the knowledge of the Bible which, by the grace of God, may make them wise unto salvation. For the same reason we have found it necessary to build up for ourselves a theological seminary where our candidates for the ministry may be qualified for any work to which the Lord our God may call them.

We rejoice in the work of the fathers at Augusta in 1845. And we rejoice in the subsequent expansion of that work in the hands of their successors. And we would render thanksgiving to God for the success which has crowned our past efforts. God has made the Southern Baptist Convention to be one of his chosen instruments for the accomplishment of his own purposes of mercy and of grace towards all mankind.

In view of these facts, let every Baptist in the South look to his colors; let him intensify his loyalty to Christ our King, and strive to glorify his name by supporting the efforts of our glorious Convention.

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SECTION TWO.

THOMAS CURTIS.

There were, I suppose, over a hundred Georgia Baptists in the Convention that assembled in Augusta in 1845. I have spoken of two of them. I wish it were

in order to give a full list of their names. But I must confine myself to those whom I personally knew. Among these was Doctor Curtis, who was a native of England, and had lived the greater part of his life in London. He came to this country after he had passed middle life. He stopped first, on his arrival, in New England, and lingered there several years.

I became acquainted with this venerable man in 1840. He was at that time pastor of the Baptist church in Macon. I was then pastor of the church in Milledgeville, only thirty miles from Macon. So I had the pleasure of meeting him several times. I was at his home, and he was at mine. We met also at some of our Baptist associations.

My relations to him were very pleasant. I found him to be a man of profound learning. The range of his information embraced a multitude of subjects, and as to these subjects he might have been called a living encyclopædia. As far as I now remember, he took no part in the public discussions in the Convention at Augusta in 1845. I suppose his reserve was due to the fact that he had come so recently among our people—too recently for him to feel himself qualified to share in the debates upon the question which then engaged the attention of the body. But he was not allowed to be a cipher. He was placed upon two of the most important committees of the Convention. On these committees we may well suppose that he rendered valuable service.

Doctor Curtis was one of the most impressive of preachers, not according to my judgment only, but according to the judgment of the best men among us. An incident will illustrate this estimate of his power.

Not long after he came to Georgia he attended a meeting of the Baptist Convention at Penfield, then the seat of Mercer University. His fame had gone before him. The committee on preaching thought it would be just the thing to have Brother Curtis preach at a time when all could hear him. And as the place was the seat of Mercer University, where were gathered some young men preparing for the ministry, they thought it would be very appropriate to have him speak on theological instruction as a necessary preparation for the ministry. They therefore appointed him to preach on that particular subject.

But very much to their surprise he declined the appointment, giving as his reason for declining that he had not expected such a task to be assigned, and had made no preparation for it; therefore he could not consent to discuss so important a subject before the Georgia Baptist Convention in an offhand speech. This attitude of the Doctor did not favorably impress the committee, and for a little while they were inclined to let him pass, but finally they appointed him to preach and left him at liberty to choose his own subject. This he cheerfully consented to do.

Only a very few of the delegates, and perhaps none of the people about Penfield, had ever heard him. There was, no doubt, a wide-spread curiosity to hear the old man from England. So, at the hour appointed, the Doctor found himself confronted with a large audience. When the hymns were sung and prayer was made, he commenced his discourse; and here began his triumph. He had not spoken many minutes before the audience was fixed in rapt attention, and he held them so to the end of his sermon. I was not present on that occasion,

but the case was reported to me soon after it occurred by an intelligent eye-witness, and I have given the facts substantially as he gave them to me. I am not sure that I remember who was my first informant, but I believe it was Brother John E. Dawson; for I know he did talk to me about that sermon, and made a remark to this effect, that Doctor Curtis by that sermon had placed himself in the estimation of his audience among the very best preachers in Georgia. Surely then he must have been a most impressive speaker. The Convention, before it adjourned, voted to appoint Brother Curtis to preach the educational sermon at its next session. This appointment he accepted, and accordingly he delivered the ensuing year an able discourse before the Convention on ministerial education, which, if I remember correctly, was published either in the Minutes or in the *Index*.

Some readers may think that Doctor Curtis was a little too fastidious in declining, at Penfield, to preach an offhand sermon on a subject of so great importance as the one assigned him by the committee. But the incident evinces the very high estimate which a *very learned man* placed upon the importance of due preparation for the pulpit. A younger man, with less learning and less experience, might have been rash enough to comply with so flattering a request; but his effort, in all probability, would have ended in disappointment to his audience and in mortification to himself. The caution of Doctor Curtis at Penfield affords a valuable lesson which all our preachers would do well to heed. The sermon which he did preach on that occasion had, no doubt, been thoroughly prepared before he reached Penfield, upon the supposition that he

might be invited to preach. And, as already shown, it was a brilliant success.

About 1844 Doctor Curtis left Georgia and went to Charleston, South Carolina, where he became pastor of the Wentworth Street Baptist Church. And it was from that church that he was sent as a delegate to the Convention at Augusta, in 1845, that organized the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1856 I met Doctor Curtis for the last time at a meeting of the Georgia Baptist Convention in Savannah.

It only remains to tell the sad story of his death. Not many years after I last saw him he set out on an excursion towards the North. At a certain period of his journey, he was on board a steamer in the Chesapeake Bay. It came to pass that the steamer was wrecked. How the catastrophe occurred I do not now remember. The captain tried to run his boat ashore, but it went down in water deep enough to cover it. A majority of the passengers and crew were able to escape by the small boats and by swimming, but many were drowned, and among them was Doctor Thomas Curtis. I have ever cherished an affectionate remembrance of this great and good man. And I also remember his noble sons, Thomas and William, who while they lived did good service in the Master's cause. William I know has passed away and I have not heard of his brother in many years. He too is probably dead.

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SECTION THREE.

B. M. SANDERS.

When it was determined by the Georgia Baptist Convention to found a school in which young men desiring to become ministers of the gospel might be educated, the first necessity was to find the right man

to place at the head of it. The school was to unite manual labor with study. It was thought that such a school would afford to the students an opportunity to defray at least a part of their expenses by working a portion of each day on the farm.

This scheme made it almost necessary that the principal should be not only a good scholar with adequate experience as a teacher, but also a good, practical farmer. Just such a man was found in the person of Rev. Billington M. Sanders. He had graduated at the University of South Carolina. After leaving college he was for several years a practical teacher. He then engaged in farming, and so successfully that he soon had a comfortable estate. These two essential qualities were supplemented by his being a useful Baptist minister. When, therefore, he was placed at the head of Mercer Institute, he was qualified to be at once the principal in the schoolroom, the manager on the farm, and the leader in the house of worship. So he was emphatically the right man in the right place.

I do not propose to follow Brother Sanders through the history of Mercer Institute. Suffice it to say that his administration, with the aid of competent assistants, was so successful that in less than seven years Mercer Institute was developed into Mercer University, and Brother Sanders was made its first president.

In his administration both in the Institute and in the University, his discipline was watchful and rigid; but at the same time he was as a father to the students, and I think the great majority of them so regarded him. But passing by his official labors let me rather devote this reminiscence to the moral of his life.

Brother Sanders was a man of deep and earnest piety, not only in forms of worship, but in practical



godliness that threw the light of his example over all within the reach of his influence. The breadth of his benevolence was sufficient to embrace all the nations of the earth. I recall an incident which will illustrate this.

About forty-five years ago, Ireland was visited with a dreadful famine by a total failure of her potato crop. The case was so serious that appeals for help came across the Atlantic to the people of our country, and nobly did they respond. In the little village of Penfield the cry was heard. Under the leadership of Brother Sanders a public meeting was held in the College chapel. The question was, "What shall we do for Ireland?" Brother Sanders answered the question in an able, earnest, and effective speech. I sat in front of him. I have never forgotten his tall and manly figure as he pleaded with the audience in behalf of the starving poor in distant Ireland. I said his speech was effective. In that small community, three hundred dollars were collected and invested in grain, which in due time was sent across the sea upon its mission of love and mercy.

Another illustration of Brother Sanders' broad philanthropy, and also of his devoted zeal in the cause of our great Redeemer, has come to my knowledge within the last few days. In a recent letter from a correspondent, who is himself an earnest worker in his Master's vineyard, and whose authority is reliable, I learn that Brother Sanders for some years devoted a tenth of his income to works of benevolence. In those years he was prosperous to such a degree that he raised his contribution to twelve per cent., and for a like reason he increased it, a few years later, to fifteen per cent. of his income. And but for the weight of



his large family we have reason to believe he would have continued to increase it as the Lord prospered him.

Of course Brother Sanders was not the only Baptist in Georgia who set apart a definite percentage of his income for benevolent purposes. The letter above referred to gives me another case which I hope to notice farther on in these reminiscences.

The moral or lesson taught by such a life as that of Brother Sanders is one which we all should study. Consider his wide benevolence, and his systematic and generous liberality. Suppose, for a moment, that we could find in Georgia five thousand Baptists whose incomes are over one thousand dollars, and who would give an average of ten per cent. to the cause of Christ. That five thousand would raise half a million of dollars. Such men as B. M. Sanders set us an example which deserves to be followed.

But Brother Sanders's benevolence was not confined to the more conspicuous objects of public charity; it was manifested in a remarkable degree along the walks of social life. He was the friend of everybody who needed help. And yet his kindness was never officious nor ostentatious. It seemed to flow naturally, as if it were a matter-of-course thing, for which he expected no return or thanks. A little incident in my own experience will illustrate this feature in his social benevolence. On one occasion I had gone from Penfield up the Georgia Railroad for some purpose not now remembered. When I left home I did not know exactly the time I would return, and therefore my family did not know when to send my buggy to meet me at the depot in Greensboro, seven miles from Pen-

field. Now it happened that on my excursion I met Brother Sanders, who, I learned, expected to return to Penfield before I could. So I asked him to let my wife know at what time to send for me. I was to reach Greensboro by the night train. For some reason, which I have forgotten, he failed to deliver my message till night had come. Then, rather than trouble my family, he sent his own conveyance to meet me at Greensboro. I found the carriage at the depot awaiting me.

This act of kindness was by no means singular; for I am sure he often conferred similar favors upon others as well as myself. It was such acts of unselfish kindness that made B. M. Sanders everybody's BROTHER in the community where he lived. If all people would follow him in his broad benevolence, the millennial day would soon illuminate this benighted world with its effulgent glory.

Having said so much about this venerable man of God, I will add a few reminiscences of his devoted companion. Mrs. Sanders was a "Georgia Baptist," and though a woman limited to a domestic sphere, she became an important factor in the great work which Georgia Baptists had undertaken at Penfield. During the period of the "Institute," while her husband was principal of the school and manager of the farm, Mrs. Sanders was presiding over the domestic comfort of the whole establishment. Every day from sixty to a hundred boys sat at her table. Though she labored, as it were, out of sight, may we not say that she was the big wheel whose unseen revolutions kept in motion all the machinery of the institution? Had she stood still, wreck and ruin might have been the consequence.

She was not toiling for money, for her husband was well able to take care of his family without the trifling compensation he might perchance receive. No, he was working for the Great Master, and she was faithfully trying to help him, and nobly did she fill the place that fell to her lot.

Her social kindness was as conspicuous as her husband's. She was a sister of mercy in every household within her reach where there was heard the cry of distress.

There is no need to multiply words. I will only repeat here what I said in a public address years ago: "When the roll of honor is made up that shall bear the names of those who built Mercer University, that roll will be incomplete without the name of

MRS. CYNTHIA SANDERS."

## CHAPTER IV.

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### SECTION ONE.

#### JOHN LEADLEY DAGG.

It was said, almost at the beginning of these reminiscences, that they are not written merely to gratify the curiosity of our readers, but that they may hold in grateful remembrance the labors and the virtues of the fathers and the mothers of our denomination in Georgia. The study of their lives should inflame our zeal, elevate our motives and guide our methods in the work of the Lord. With this high aim in view, I propose to devote this space to the memory of John Leadley Dagg.

In a previous chapter I have made a brief mention of him, but on account of the rich lesson of his life, he deserves a more extended notice.

I was Doctor Dagg's son-in-law, and was a professor in Mercer University for nine years while he was its president. Thus it was my good fortune to know him well, and to learn much, from his own lips, of his early life.

His father could not give him a liberal education. Perhaps two years would cover all the time that he attended school; and this was in his early boyhood. About the same time he lost both his parents and was left an orphan, with the care of a younger sister thrown upon his hands. Such was the dark cloud that gathered over his young life.

Scant as was his opportunity at school, it was enough to awaken his desire for knowledge and in some degree

to teach him how to study. He, therefore, devoted his spare time to his text-books. In this way, by private study, he made such progress that at the early age of sixteen he was placed in charge of a school in the country, and was able to give his patrons entire satisfaction.

While engaged in that school he availed himself of all his leisure time to prosecute his own studies along the lines of a liberal education, and thus he was continually adding to his acquisition of knowledge. This method of self-culture he faithfully followed throughout the greater part of his public life.

Doctor Dagg was converted on his fifteenth birthday, February 13, 1809, was baptized in 1812, and ordained to the work of the ministry a few years later. Then commenced his career as a preacher of the gospel. It was not my privilege ever to hear him preach; for he had ceased to preach before I knew him. But I know, from the testimony of others, that he was held in the highest esteem and admiration, by those to whom he ministered, as a preacher of extraordinary power and influence.

It is worthy of notice that after he had devoted himself to the work of preaching the gospel, Doctor Dagg did not cease to be a student. Before his eyes failed him it was his custom, as he told me himself, to rise at four o'clock and study till the duties of the morning claimed his attention. Under such study, by the light of a candle, no wonder his eyes failed him! While yet in the prime of his life he became unable to read or write. But fortunately, his eldest daughter was qualified to be his reader and amanuensis. With her assistance, he still prosecuted his researches both in secular and sacred learning. It was through such difficulties as these

that Doctor Dagg reached his high position as a scholar and a theologian. He was well versed in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He was a profound mathematician. He was well informed in the natural sciences, and he was a metaphysician and logician.

But while thus devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, he was never forgetful of the higher claims of the ministry. Indeed, he made his studies subsidiary to his preparation for the pulpit, and he gave certain hours every day, when not providentially hindered, to pastoral visiting. His church in Sansom Street, Philadelphia, numbered about one thousand members. It may have required a year to make his rounds, but his aim was to become personally acquainted with every household. Hence his people loved him. He was to his flock a visible "shepherd" and they delighted to hear his voice in their homes, however exalted or however humble those homes might be.

But it was in Sansom Street that another affliction was added to his infirmities. If I remember rightly, it was when he was in the pulpit, preaching to his people, that his voice suddenly sank to a whisper and he was not able to finish his discourse. This was the result of an affection of the throat that had often troubled him. It became so severe at last that he was compelled to give up preaching.

Just here, pause and contemplate the man—so lame that he could not walk without a crutch, so blind that he could neither read nor write, and at last, so broken in voice that he could not preach! And all these calamities came upon him while he was yet in the morning of his life.

In this sad condition, did he go into retirement?

By no means: his vast stores of knowledge were too valuable to be wasted in obscurity. He was very soon called to take charge of a theological school at Haddington, near Philadelphia, where it was his privilege to train young men for the ministry. He afterwards became the president of the Female Atheneum in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he labored with wonderful success for six years. He was then elected professor of theology in Mercer University, and in a year or two was promoted to the presidency, still retaining, however, his chair of theology. Here again he found the employment which he loved.

His fitness for this kind of work may be illustrated by the following incident: At one of our commencements, Hon. Green Foster delivered a public address. In speaking of the University it was natural to allude to the presiding officer. Doctor Dagg was sitting on the rostrum to the left of the speaker. At a certain point in his speech Colonel Foster proposed to relate an anecdote. I can not give it in his words, but in substance it was about this: A certain general had, for many years, served his king most faithfully in the field. He had won many victories over the king's enemies, and had greatly extended his dominions. But, at last, this noble warrior was so disabled by wounds that he could no longer serve in the field. He presented himself at court to express to his sovereign his deep regret that he could no longer serve him.

When the king had heard his story he said to him: "Do not be distressed because you can not serve me on the field. I have other work of great importance, for which your past experiences have abundantly qualified you. You shall be at the head of my military schools



to train my young officers for their duties in the field." Then, turning to the president, the speaker applied the story to illustrate Doctor Dagg's present position. He, too, had done valiant service in the open field against the enemies of our Heavenly King, and won for him many signal victories; but now the Master had placed him in a position where he might train young ministers for service in His cause. All saw at a glance the appropriateness of the application. Doctor Dagg was deeply affected by it. He told me afterwards that Foster's story had given him great comfort.

When Doctor Dagg retired from the University, he did not cease from labor. For several years he had been thinking of writing a manual of theology for the use of students preparing for the ministry. When, therefore, he found himself free from his public labors, he was ready to enter upon his life as an author. His "Manual of Theology" and "Church Order," then his "Moral Science" and "Evidences of Christianity," all appeared within a reasonable time. These works are too well known to need any comments from me. Moreover, my impressions of Doctor Dagg as a writer have already been given in full in the "History of Georgia Baptists."

These reminiscences of Doctor Dagg, incomplete as they are for the want of space, present to us a wonderful character. Think of a boy, poor, an orphan, without a rich friend to help him, working his way, by his upright deportment and his patient toil, to a respectable and honored manhood. Then think of him as a man afflicted with lameness and with partial blindness and bereft of his voice still working his way upward and onward till, as a benefactor of mankind, he



stands the peer of the great and the good in all this broad land of ours. Is not such a character worthy of the emulation and the imitation of all our young men? It is like some lofty monument. The beauty of its proportions excites our admiration, while its altitude points us toward heaven.

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SECTION TWO.

MRS. J. L. DAGG.

Georgia Baptists include among them many noble women, as well as men, who truly deserve to be remembered. But, because they have lived for the most part in retirement, and almost in seclusion, their pious and self-denying labors in the Master's service have failed to attract the notice of the busy public, and reminiscences of them are, in a great measure, limited to the sad column of "obituaries" which are often passed unread, save by relatives and a few personal friends.

But this neglect has not been intentional. It has been the natural result of the retired lives which our sisters have led. This is especially true of the great majority of them who have lived in country homes away from our cities and our towns.

I have already presented in these reminiscences two signal examples of our Georgia sisters—Mrs. Rebecca Mathews and Mrs. Cynthia Sanders—who may well be called "Mothers in Israel."

I now propose to give what I remember of Mrs. J. L. Dagg.

I first met Doctor and Mrs. Dagg in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in 1837. But my interview was a brief one. The next time I saw them was soon after Doctor Dagg

had taken charge of Mercer University, in 1844. From that time I had the best opportunity to become acquainted with Mrs. Dagg and to learn, in our frequent conversations, some items of her early life.

Her maiden name was Mary Young, and her first husband was Rev. Noah Davis. And here let me add parenthetically, Mr. Davis was the founder of the American Baptist Publication Society. To the development and growth of this society he devoted the latter part of his short but noble life. In his arduous labors he no doubt found a sympathizing helper in his faithful wife. He did not live to see the grand success of what, at first, seemed to be a bold but doubtful enterprise. His wife, however, lived to see the prayers and the hopes of her husband realized in the development of the society which he had founded into one of the most beneficent publishing-houses ever established on this globe. It stands to-day second to none, unless it may be to the British and Foreign, and the American Bible Societies. This was the first great work in which Mrs. Davis (afterwards Mrs. Dagg) became an important factor.

By the death of her husband Mrs. Davis was left a widow with two little boys upon her hands and her heart. She lived in this sad condition two years or more, when she became the wife of Dr. J. L. Dagg.

He, too, had children by a former marriage—three daughters and one son. These Mrs. Dagg at once took under her care with the tenderness and faithfulness of a mother. The children, however, had not been neglected during Brother Dagg's widowerhood. He had living with him a maiden sister, several years younger than himself. Her name was Sarah. She

had the motherless little ones in her charge for seven or eight years. And kindly did she watch over and guide them. They repaid her kindness with an undying love. As long as they lived "Aunt Sallie" was a cherished name in all their households. But at length "Aunt Sallie" married and left her brother's home. Then the care of the children devolved upon Mrs. Dagg, and nobly did she meet its responsibilities.

I can not record the details of her life in Philadelphia, at Haddington, and at Tuscaloosa. It must suffice to say that in all these positions she was a prime factor in the work of her husband; for it was in a great degree due to her wise and faithful co-operation that, in spite of his physical infirmities, he was able to accomplish so much for the benefit of his own and succeeding generations.

The elements of her character were such as qualified her to be the woman above described. Among these elements was her culture.

At Tuscaloosa, she filled the chair of rhetoric in the Atheneum with signal success. She had read much of secular literature. And when reading for Dr. Dagg she had the opportunity of enjoying the best religious literature in the English language. In addition to a high mental culture she was an accomplished pianist and a most melodious and delightful singer. Again, she was a correct elocutionist. This gave to her conversation an inexpressible charm. Then, as a finishing touch to her accomplishments, she was exceedingly graceful in her manners. She understood and observed the proprieties of social life. Had she been so inclined, she was well prepared with her rich endowments of mind and manners to adorn the circles of worldly so-

ciety. But she had no such inclination. And this leads me to speak of her piety.

Whatever may have been her fondness for the world in her early girlhood days, when she at length put on Christ by baptism she consecrated herself to a higher and better life than can be found anywhere along the walks of worldly society. She chose rather to be a "companion of all them that fear the Lord, and keep his precepts," and she loved the house of prayer and the place of public worship. In these she hoped to find the water of life and the bread of heaven, that her spiritual strength might be sustained.

Mrs. Dagg was not content to be only a recipient of heavenly grace, she desired to be also its distributor to the extent of her opportunity. Hence she was ready for any church work that might be assigned her. She was willing to lead the female prayer-meeting when it came to her turn, and delighted to gather around her a Bible class of young ladies from the village that she might aid them in the systematic study of the Scriptures. And I venture to say that few Bible classes have ever been more intelligently taught than hers.

But her benevolence did not stop at her Bible class. It extended to the poor and to the suffering ones within her reach. Had her means been equal to her good will, this whole world would have been the beneficiary of her charity.

During the last years of her life she was afflicted with blindness. She died during the war at the house of her stepson, Rev. J. F. Dagg.

In taking leave of this interesting character, may I not mention that Mrs. Dagg was the mother of Professor Noah K. Davis, of the University of Virginia?

He graduated early in the fifties at Mercer University while Doctor Dagg was its president. His subsequent life has conferred honor upon his alma mater, and the friends of Mercer may well be proud of him.

Mrs. Dagg's only daughter, Mrs. R. D. Mallery, of Macon, like her mother, is a most accomplished lady, and, like her mother, she has worked with all fidelity with her husband in his arduous labors. She is a bright illustration of the life and character of her mother.

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SECTION THREE.

CHARLES D. MALLERY.

The account given of Brother Mallery in the "History of Georgia Baptists" contains a full report of a sermon preached by Rev. J. R. Kendrick, D.D., in a memorial of him soon after his death. I do not know that I ever read a better memorial sermon anywhere than is there given us of Doctor Mallery. It presents to us the man in all the phases of his life and character. It is done methodically, perspicuously, and forcibly and exhaustively. As one who reads it comes to the end, he feels satisfied that there was no need to add anything more.

I read the sermon with peculiar feelings.

Brother Kendrick was talking about a man whom I had known and loved, and with whom I had been intimately associated in religious and denominational work for nearly thirty years. Hence as I read his sermon, my memory and my judgment confirmed the truthfulness of his testimony. I do not know that there is a single sentence that I would care to modify. In that sermon Charles D. Mallery stands before us as an illus-

trious example of the moral grandeur to which a fervent faith in Jesus Christ can lift a human being. Such a man as Mallary was can not be developed on this earth save by the power and grace of the indwelling Christ. We see in him a practical exemplification of Paul's words: "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live, in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Such a man was our beloved Mallary.

In the face of that record, nothing is left for me to do but to add a few personal recollections that may serve to illustrate and verify the character so ably presented to us by Doctor Kendrick.

When the Baptist Convention of Georgia resolved to elevate Mercer Institute to the rank of a university, the first thing they needed was an endowment. Brother Mallary was selected as the man to raise it. He was then pastor of the Baptist church at Milledgeville. So thoroughly was he interested in this enterprise that he gave up his church and accepted the agency, still, however, making Milledgeville his headquarters. At that time the Georgia Railroad was building. It had hardly reached Greensboro. The Central Railroad had not reached much farther than Millen. Hence an agent in those days had to rely upon private conveyance to canvass the State. This made the work very laborious. And to increase the difficulty the strength of the denomination was, for the most part, in the country churches. But Brother Mallary, though in feeble health, was equal to the situation. With his horse and buggy he went forth on his lonely drives over all the territory of the Convention that he might find those

Baptists who were willing to help endow the university. He sometimes found them in groups, by so arranging his movements as to be on hand as often as possible at the conferences of the churches, and at as many associations as he could attend; but he took care to appeal to individuals also when he had opportunity to do it.

While engaged in this work, he did not forget his ministry. He preached wherever he found an open door. And no doubt his power in the pulpit and the influence which it gave him over the affections of his brethren contributed greatly to the success of his agency. By the time Brother Mallary had finished his work he was widely known and greatly beloved throughout the State.

Such was his success that he was able in about two years to report to the Convention an endowment of sixty-five thousand dollars. All of this, except what little cash may have been given, was in notes bearing interest at eight per cent. per annum.

The first Board of Trustees met in Penfield in 1838 to organize the faculty of the university. As a member of the Board, I was present on that occasion. It was perfectly manifest, in a few minutes after the Board came together, that Doctor Mallary was the choice of the brethren for the presidency of the college. I think there was not a dissenting voice. My impression is that he was elected by acclamation; but, at any rate, the demonstration in his favor was so outspoken that Brother Mallary felt it his duty to reply to it. In a very feeling speech he decisively declined the proposed honor. He based his decision upon the ground that his convictions of duty would not permit



him to accept a position that would greatly hinder his ministerial usefulness. The brethren were convinced that it was needless to press the matter any further. The incident clearly shows how completely this good man had devoted himself to the work of preaching the gospel.

I heard Brother Mallary preach many times. The first time I ever heard him was in 1838. He took for his text the words of the angel to the women at the sepulcher: "Ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." His theme was the resurrection of Christ. And his aim was to show that this wonderful fact is the basal rock upon which Christianity, with all our hopes of salvation, must stand. I can't give all his topics; but he made the resurrection of Christ to be the proof of almost everything else that is taught in the New Testament. And he sustained each point by appropriate Scriptures. Every thought seemed to clothe the resurrection of Jesus, that Sunday morning, with increased luster that shined onward and upward to the climax of the future glory of the Kingdom of God. When he had unfolded the doctrine of the subject, at any point, he would recur to the words of the angel: "Ye seek Jesus; he is not here; he is risen as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay." This was the beautiful refrain that ever and anon came upon the ear like a grand chorus designed to mingle its significance with the sublime music of the sermon. It was then I was made to understand the resurrection of Christ as I had never understood it before. And I have never forgotten that sermon.



It is simply marvelous that a man so meek, so unselfish and so humble as he, should have been the object of chief attraction in almost every circle in which he moved. And yet this was true of Doctor Mallary. At the risk of a little egotism, I gladly put on record here that he was to me a most interesting and instructive and helpful companion. When he gave up the pastorate at Milledgeville I was, after a few months, his successor. But, as before stated, he continued for a time to make Milledgeville his headquarters. Hence we were brought into close relations. I can not tell how much I was indebted to his instructive conversation, his wise counsels, and to his kind support with his social influence among the brethren for my success as a pastor over that people. I thank God to-day for my association with that great and good man.

A single case will tell the story of his compassion for the poor. A widow, with four children, was seated at the fireside in her humble home. She and her children were very sad. Few words were spoken. They had, that very evening, eaten their last morsel of food. They knew not what the morrow would bring. An hour of sadness passed by. They could expect nothing but downright beggary or starvation.

But hark! There is a call at the front gate. One of the older boys goes out to answer the call. Presently he returns and informs his mother that Mr. Mallary's wagon is at the gate loaded with something for her.

All in that house knew Mr. Mallary. They had known him in better days. But the death of the husband and father, with other adverse conditions, had reduced the family to deep poverty. Mr. Mallary was

then living thirty miles away. Little did the poor woman dream that he was thinking of her. But he had known something of her trials, and the morning of that very day he was impressed with the fear that she might be in want. And, at any rate, he knew that the supplies would be needed soon, if not just then; so he sent them. They came just in time to make glad the weeping household. In this incident we see not only the beneficent charity of a noble heart, but also the guiding providence of the widow's God and the orphan's Father.

Such acts as this, added to his liberal gifts to every good and noble enterprise, signalize the unselfish benevolence of Dr. C. D. Mallary.

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SECTION FOUR.

JOHN E. DAWSON.

Thirty-six years have passed away since the death of Doctor Dawson. During those thirty-six years the generation with which he was identified have, with few exceptions, followed him to the grave. Especially is this true of those who were associated with him in his ministerial life and labors. The great majority of Georgia Baptists now living have no personal knowledge of Dr. John E. Dawson. For their benefit, I propose to give my own recollections of the man.

I first heard Brother Dawson preach in November, 1834. He was then about twenty-nine years of age, and the sermon which I heard was one of his earliest efforts. He was not yet ordained. His manner in the pulpit was easy, unaffected and graceful. The sermon was short, but earnest; and in some of his paragraphs

he gave indications of that tenderness and pathos with which he was endowed.

He was four years my senior, but we were both ordained in the same year—1835—he in January, and I in August. In November, 1835, we were both present at the meeting of the Georgia Baptist Convention at Shiloh Church in the near neighborhood of Penfield, then the seat of the Mercer Institute. That was the first convention in which I ever sat as a member. It was a very important occasion. Mercer Institute had been only two years in operation. It and Judson's mission in Burma were the topics of absorbing interest. The Institute was designed to encourage the education of our young men who desired to enter the ministry. Of course the time and place demanded a sermon on the education of ministers, and Brother Dawson was called upon to preach it. I suppose he was the most recently ordained minister in the house except one, and that one was myself, and yet he was selected to perform that important service. And, if my memory is not at fault, he did not know till he reached the Convention that he would be called upon for such an effort. Nevertheless he accepted the appointment and performed the duty assigned him with such success as fully satisfied his friends and the Convention.

An old man perhaps would, under such circumstances, have declined the appointment, as Dr. Thomas Curtis did, not quite ten years later, at another meeting of the Convention with the church at Penfield in the same neighborhood. But Brother Dawson did not fail. He was fortunate in possessing just such qualifications as fitted him for just such an emergency.

He had a clean-cut perception of his own want at that very time of a liberal education. He had the sense to know, by his very want of it, what must be the advantage of a wide range of knowledge to the minister of the gospel. He had only an academic education—very good as far as it went, but limited in its range; and up to the time that he was baptized he had done little to extend it. With this self-knowledge, he was prepared, without alluding to himself, to persuade the four or five hundred people before him that the best thing they could do for their children was to educate them. I can not recall his lines of thought or his illustrations, but, though he did not fail, his sermon was not a fair specimen of his great ability.

Doctor Dawson was by nature an orator. He was not made an orator by the training of the schools; for of this he had very little. He stood before his audience as a handsome man, with graceful movements and with an exceedingly expressive countenance. His voice was clear, distinct, flexible and melodious. While speaking, its sweet and impressive tones faithfully represented all the pulsations of his emotional nature. This made him, without his being conscious of it, a most excellent elocutionist. This mere elocution was wonderful, not only in delivering his own thoughts, but also in giving utterance to the thoughts of others. In quoting a text of Scripture, for instance, his inflections, his emphasis, his pauses and his tones were so adjusted to the design and meaning of the text as to give to it all its intended force.

Another element of his oratory was his pure and almost perfect rhetoric. Doctor Dawson seems to have been endowed by nature with a most exquisite taste.

It ruled his judgments of the "beautiful" in all its forms. He therefore comprehended the proprieties of speech, and seldom violated them. In the selection of words and the construction of sentences few writers or speakers can be found more correct than he.

When to these natural endowments we add what the grace of God had done for him in giving him, by his own experience, a thorough knowledge of the moral and spiritual wants of his fellow creatures, an earnest desire to save them from impending ruin, and a burning zeal for the glory of God through the preached gospel, we can see that Doctor Dawson was possessed of all the elements that were needed to make him a great and influential orator. His growth in the ministry was rapid. It was not long after he preached that sermon at Shiloh before he was held to be the leading preacher among Georgia Baptists.

I think it was in 1853, at a public gathering of some sort in LaGrange, I heard Brother Dawson preach to a very large audience. His text was:

"If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job xii. 14.)

However Job may have intended that question to be answered, one thing is certain: So far as our present responsibilities are concerned, we have but one life in which to meet them. This was the preacher's theme. His analysis of the subject was simple but comprehensive:

1. We have only one life on this earth. This topic was treated briefly, only to emphasize the fact that our present life, short as it may be, can never be repeated. Therefore, we shall have, when once it has passed, no opportunity to amend its errors, or to escape their far-reaching consequences. Yet into this short life are

crowded responsibilities upon whose faithful fulfilment depends our destiny through all eternity.

2. The extent of those responsibilities. They include all the duties that we owe, (1) to God, our Father in Heaven; (2) to our fellow creatures; (3) to ourselves, and (4) to our children.

It was in unfolding the nature and the magnitude of these responsibilities that Brother Dawson's effort reached, on that occasion, the highest powers of human speech. He did what few men can do; that is, he combined in one sermon all the elements of true oratory. He was ornate in such a degree that the imagination was charmed; and we listened to his beautiful words as one may listen to the strains of magnificent music. He was argumentative—without the stiffness of formal logic; he so marshaled his array of facts as to afford deductions and inferences that should convince the understanding and guide the judgment. And then he was persuasive. In view of the solemn responsibilities resting upon us, which he had most forcibly presented, he did not fail to appeal, in words of pathos and of power, to every class of the people before him to remember, and, with all their strength, to fulfil, the stupendous obligations that bound them—pressing upon their hearts the fearful truth that we have but one life in which we can meet them, in which we can do our duty—if we fail now, we fail forever.

Was Brother Dawson's sermon which I have above described an exceptionally good one for him to preach? By no means; it was only one of hundreds just like it. I wish I had space to tell of other cases in which he moved his hearers as the wind moves the standing corn. May our young brethren catch his spirit and emulate his zeal.

## CHAPTER V.

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### SECTION ONE.

THOMAS COOPER.

IN presenting to our readers a notice of a Baptist deacon, it may be well to set forth the qualifications which should be found in a deacon. Paul (I. Tim. iii.), having first given the qualifications that should be found in a bishop or pastor, proceeds to tell us what sort of a man a deacon should be. He says:

“In like manner deacons should be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. . . . Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (R. V.)

These words of Paul are simple, clear, and explicit. They teach that a deacon should be a man of unblemished moral character, and of great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Just such a man was Deacon Thomas Cooper, of the Eatonton Baptist church. He was an old man when I first became acquainted with him, in 1829. He was then living in Eatonton. His parents came to Georgia from Virginia and settled in Hancock County. He belonged to that generation of Baptists that came down to us from the latter half of the eighteenth century. I do not know his age; but in 1829 I suppose



he must have been at least sixty years old. He was, therefore contemporary with the Marshalls and the Mercers, the elder Brantly and Adiel Sherwood and with other fathers of that era.

His wife was the daughter of James and Sarah Harvey, of Hancock County. He was the father of Hon. Mark A. Cooper, whose name was for half a century a household word in the homes of Georgia; for it was a name that stood for purity in patriotism, for wisdom in statesmanship, and for nobility in personal character. I think he was the only son of his father. But he had quite a large family of his own. His eldest son, Frederick, was a sterling member of the Baptist church of Rome while I was its pastor. He was killed in the war, leaving his wife with three little boys, Paul, Frederick, and Walter. His brother, Thomas, also died early, leaving his wife, one daughter, who became Mrs. Saunders, and two sons, one of whom is now Dr. Hunter Cooper, of Atlanta, and the other Mr. Thomas Cooper, of Decatur, Georgia. Colonel M. A. Cooper had also several daughters, two of whom, I know, still survive him. One is Mrs. William A. Pope, of Washington, and the other is Miss Rosa Cooper, of Atlanta. They are ladies of earnest piety and active in all church work.

Deacon Cooper had three daughters. One was Mrs. John Nisbet, of Athens, and some of her descendants are still living in that beautiful city. Another daughter was Mrs. Samuel Boykin, formerly of Milledgeville. She was the mother of Rev. Samuel Boykin and his brother, Rev. T. C. Boykin, who have been, for many years, faithful and useful laborers in all our denominational enterprises, to the extent of their opportunity.



The third daughter was the wife of Dr. Joel Branham, of Eatonton. She was the mother of Hon. Joel Branham, of Rome, Ga., and of Rev. I. R. Branham, lately deceased, whose consecrated life won the confidence and love of all who knew him.

Having presented the foregoing glimpses of his family, it is time to consider more fully the man himself.

His religion was not a dress suit hidden away in some dark closet to be donned on Sunday for a dress parade at church. No, verily, his religion was a seamless vesture, clean and white, which enveloped his whole character through every step of his daily life. Whether at his fireside, or on the street, or in the court-house, or in the grand-jury room—always and everywhere—his religion was his daily dress.

Baptists are noted for the great stress which they give, or at any rate, profess to give, to what we call the Christian's experience. Brother Cooper's religion, as above explained, would imply that he must have had a clear and profound impression of its reality and its power. He never told me his experience in terms, and yet in conversation I, young as I was, could notice that he did not hesitate to use his experience to guide him along certain lines of religious thought, or to help him to understand the Scriptures in certain cases. I remember, we were discussing a question of interpretation, about which some people, at that time, were holding, as we thought, erroneous opinions. Brother Cooper defended the Baptist view of the case, and then clinched the argument by saying, in substance, "and this interpretation agrees with the Christian's experience." Whether the thought of using our experience

as a help to understand the Scriptures had ever occurred to me before I can not, at this late day, positively affirm. But one thing I know. The way he put it impressed the thought upon my mind, and it has been to me as a pearl of great value. In after years I was able to expand the thought till I reached the conclusion, which I think is held by the orthodox divines, that the Christian's experience not only helps him to understand the Scriptures, but it is, for him, the supreme evidence that they are of God and not of men. All of this may be summed up in one brief sentence—the Christian's experience is the best proof of Christianity. Such it was to Deacon Thomas Cooper.

We have already noticed Brother Cooper's qualifications for the important office which he held. They made him the pastor's right-hand man. Oh! I remember, when Brother Dawson was pastor, how he leaned on his aged deacon. But he was also a wise counselor in the conference, and a faithful servant of the church in all its enterprises and its charities. Brother Cooper stood as a common referee among his brethren. What would our churches be if all their deacons were just such men as the scriptures require them to be, and as the example of Deacon Cooper shows they might be? My brother, are you a deacon? Then let me say to you, for Jesus' sake, give all diligence to fill up the measure of your duty in the sacred office which you hold. But while I say this, I am glad to hope that many are trying to do their duty. Indeed, I am sure of this. God bless you, and give you "great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Brother Cooper, like Brother B. M. Sanders, devoted, for a time, one-tenth of his income to benevo-

lent and charitable works. As the Lord prospered him he gradually increased his donations, first to twelve per cent., then to fifteen per cent., and at last to twenty-five per cent.—equal to one-fourth of his income. This he continued till his death.

I learned these facts in a recent letter from Brother T. C. Boykin, the grandson of Brother Cooper. It appears from the letter that Brother Sanders and Brother Cooper agreed together on the mode of contributing to the work of the Lord. Each increased his per cent. as the Lord prospered him. Was any man ever made a pauper by giving to the Lord? I don't believe it. On the contrary, a dollar given to the Lord is one dollar which the giver can never lose.

I must mention one more instance of Brother Cooper's liberality, as given in Brother Boykin's letter. When our brother, Rev. J. H. Campbell, was trying, in his early youth, to prepare himself for the ministry, Brother Cooper took him into his house and gave him his board for a whole year that he might study theology under Doctor Sherwood, who was at that time living in the near neighborhood, where he was teaching a theological class. This benefit bore fruit in the useful life of Dr. Jesse H. Campbell.

In 1843 Brother Cooper died. That year the Central Association met with a church not far from Eaton. The delegation was full, and several visitors were present. On the first day of the meeting it happened that Brother Campbell was to follow the brother who was appointed to preach. When the sermon was over he rose in the pulpit, but instead of following the sermon he took a theme of his own. In a feeling way he alluded to several recent deaths in the churches of

the Association. Among them was Deacon Thomas Cooper. He had been one of the organizers of the Association. For years he had been one of its wisest counselors and one of its most liberal benefactors. It was well for Brother Campbell to pay a merited tribute to the memory of that great and good man whom all his brethren loved so well.

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SECTION TWO.

JOHN B. WALKER.

In the year 1784 or 1785, not long after Cornwallis had delivered his sword to Washington, there was a group of emigrants at Yorktown. Among them were the families of Edmond Byne and Robert Carlton. In the harbor lay the brig Nancy, about to sail for Savannah, Georgia. Aboard that ship the emigrants, with their children, servants and household goods, took passage for their new homes in Georgia.

Mr. Byne's family included his wife and his children, among whom were two daughters. Mr. Carlton's family also included his wife and several children, among whom were, at least, three daughters. The heads of these families were already members of Baptist churches and were people of sincere and earnest piety.

When all things were ready the ship weighed anchor and passed down the Chesapeake and out upon the bosom of the broad Atlantic. The wind was favorable, and the day was promising. The passengers were full of hope, expecting to reach Savannah in three days.

But hardly twenty-four hours had passed before the

weather changed. In a little while a dreadful storm struck the ship. It dared not hug the shore, for fear of the breakers along the Carolina coast. Its only safety was the open sea. Thus it was carried far away from its proper course. For days and weeks the storm, with only partial intervals, continued to rage. I never saw a storm at sea; therefore, I can not describe it. My grandmother, the youngest daughter of Mr. Carlton, a young lady of about eighteen summers, was an eyewitness of all the horrors that threatened for weeks the safety of the ship and the lives of the passengers. From her lips I heard the fearful story. One night it seemed as if the time of the end had come. The passengers were lying in their berths enduring as well as they could the peril of the hour, when suddenly the ship careened so much that it seemed to be falling on its side. It was then the voice of one of those pious men was heard, amidst the howling winds, saying: "Lord, help us up," and straightway the ship was set upright, and that danger was passed. Was this coincidence, between the earnest prayer to God and the relief which followed, due to the action only of unknown "second causes"? Subsequent events proved that God had use for at least some of those passengers and therefore preserved them. I can not linger longer upon this memorable voyage. Suffice it to say that the brig Nancy, after five full weeks of storm and peril, dropped her anchor in the river in front of the city of Savannah.

After a short delay in Savannah, Mr. Byne and Mr. Carlton, with their families, proceeded up the country to their destined homes. Mr. Byne settled in Burke County, where, after a time, he was ordained to the

Baptist ministry, and Mr. Carlton settled in Wilkes, near Broad River.

In these preliminary paragraphs I have made special mention of Mr. Byne and Mr. Carlton, because they were both Baptists; they were from the same county, King and Queen, in Virginia; their families were intimately associated in their fearful voyage to Savannah; and, finally, because both families have left descendants in Georgia, many of whom are Baptists.

One of the daughters of Mr. Byne married a Mr. Walker. I am sorry that I can not give the first name of either of the parties. They made their home in Morgan County, where they raised a family of three sons and two daughters. One of the sons was John Byne Walker, the subject of this sketch.

With his early years I was not acquainted. He was a married man and a member of the church when I first knew him. He was a large planter and lived, for a time, on his estate in the country; but after a while he built an elegant house for his family in the suburbs of Madison, that they might enjoy better social and religious privileges than they could find in the country. They also transferred their church membership from Indian Creek to the church in Madison, with which their subsequent lives were identified. In his new home Brother Walker was surrounded with all that was needful to insure him and his family a large degree of domestic happiness, and he and his noble wife dispensed a wide hospitality.

But it was in Brother Walker's religious life that I knew him best. I was for two years his pastor. I had known him, to some extent, before; but as his pastor I knew him in his home and in the church. As

a church member he was punctual and faithful to meet all that was required of him. I really can not recall one single time that he failed to be present at a public service of the church, except when he was absent from home. He was not used to speaking in public, yet in conference he would speak on any matter of business with great clearness and with sound judgment. Hence he was listened to as a safe adviser; and in prayer-meeting he would, when called on, lead in prayer. And he was liberal in giving to all the charities of the church. Now, John B. Walker was a rich man, and some may say that he could afford to be liberal. Very true; but how many thousands are there who can afford to give, some more and some less, who never give a cent? When Doctor Mallery was collecting the first endowment for Mercer University (I think that was the time), Brother Walker gave his note bearing interest at eight per cent. for fifteen hundred dollars. And he paid that note.

Brother Walker loved his brethren. Hence he was often present at our religious convocations. I remember once, at a meeting of the Central Association, the colporter was making his report. The incidents he told were intensely interesting. He told of meeting one old man who was so blind that he could not read a common Bible. He needed one of large type, but the cost of such a one in those days was very high—far beyond the poor man's means. The colporter had none to give him. He told this story with a pathos that went to every heart. Brother Walker met the case practically; he told the colporter to get just such a Bible as the old man needed and he would "foot the



bill." Such a man was John B. Walker—a faithful, Christian and an earnest Baptist.

But the closing years of his life were sad. Three of his children died soon after they were grown. Then his wife was taken away also, and his other children were separated from him. In the meantime, as an effect of the war, he was reduced to poverty. He left his elegant home and lived almost alone in a humble cottage only a few miles from his former residence. He was then very old, but his faith in God was never shaken.

A friend, who knew him in his prosperity, when with him not long before he died, alluded sympathetically to his heavy losses. "Yes," said this aged saint. "I have lost all, except what I have given away." What he had given away he had given to the Lord. That, he knew, was still to his credit. One might preach a sermon upon his words, "I have lost all, except what I have given away."

In conclusion, let me add a few more words about the Byne and Carlton families. Mr. Byne's other daughter, Anne, married Mr. Harris, of Baldwin County. They had one son and two daughters. Their son was Hon. Iverson L. Harris, who sat for a time as one of the judges of our Supreme Court. A daughter of Mrs. Harris married Mr. Hansell. He was the father of General Andrew Hansell, who was the father of Captain William A. Hansell, of Atlanta, and his daughter, Lela, is now the wife of my son, L. P. Hill-  
yer, of Macon. Mr. Carlton's eldest daughter became Rebecca Matthews. She was the mother of two Baptist preachers—Phillip and James Matthews, Jr. Mr. Carlton's youngest daughter married John Freeman, a



soldier of the Revolution. She had one daughter, who married Shaler Hillyer, who was the father of Rev. J. F. Hillyer, Hon. Junius Hillyer, and myself.

One of my sons, Rev. J. L. D. Hillyer, is a preacher. So the Carlton family sent out five Baptist preachers for Georgia.

Finally, I have in Macon a little grandson, Hansell Towers Hillyer, who, on his father's side, is a lineal descendant of Robert Carlton, and on his mother's side is a lineal descendant of Edmond Byne. Thus these two families, a hundred years after the voyage of the brig Nancy, became connected by marriage.

## CHAPTER VI.

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### SECTION ONE.

#### TRAIL CREEK CHURCH.

TRAIL Creek Meeting-house stood in a grove of oaks on the roadside, two miles east of Athens, which was built on the west side of the Oconee River.

Exactly when the church was organized I do not know. I first became acquainted with it in 1822, when I was about thirteen years old.

The membership of Trail Creek church was composed chiefly of people who lived round about it in the country upon their farms. A few others may have been engaged in various mechanical trades. These two classes, including, of course, such members of their families, both males and females, as had professed conversion, constituted the main body of the church. These were all plain people. Their education was limited to such as they had obtained in the "old-field schools" of that day. In addition, however, to these there were a few lady members from the town of Athens. At that time there was no Baptist church in Athens. Hence the ladies referred to, being true to their Baptist faith, identified themselves with their brethren and sisters in the country church that was nearest to them.

Another element of the membership was made up of colored people from the neighboring plantations and possibly some from the town of Athens. Let it never be forgotten that the Christian peo-

ple of the South were not then, and are not now, unmindful of the spiritual wants of the colored people. In "ante-bellum times" nearly all our churches included a full proportion of colored members. Provision was made for their accommodation in our meeting-houses. On baptismal occasions, it was perfectly in order for white and colored candidates to meet at the same water, and be baptized by the same pastor. In the house of God, they listened to the same sermon and when the time for the memorial supper came they partook together of the sacred elements. In all this, Trail Creek was no exception to the general rule. We would have these facts remembered by our descendants as an offset to the severe denunciations which have been poured out upon Southern Christians on account of their connection with slavery.

The preachers who served this church were, with only one or two exceptions in later times, plain men with but little education. The first one I remember was Mr. Goss. I think his first name was Isham. He was the pastor, if I remember correctly, in 1822. He was then an old man. Some of his sons followed in his footsteps and became Baptist preachers. Another pastor, whom I knew much better than I did Mr. Goss, was Rev. Jack Lumpkin. He was a brother to Chief Justice Joseph H. Lumpkin and Governor Wilson Lumpkin. His education, like most of our Georgia preachers of that day, was very limited. But he was a man of good practical sense, and of deep piety and earnest zeal.

These preachers had never heard of the "higher criticism." They knew nothing of church history. But they knew Christ and him crucified, and were well ac-

quainted with all the steps of the Christain's experience. These themes they could unfold to their hearers in such terms as at once to allure the ungodly and to comfort the saint in all his perplexities and doubts. Then in their social relations there was a beautiful serenity and at the same time a seriousness of manner that spoke of Jesus and his love to every beholder.

I remember, on one occasion, Mr. Lumpkin came to spend the night at our house. My mother and grandmother were glad to see him. He was their pastor. After supper, the evening was spent in religious conversation, and closed with family worship. Next morning, it happened that I was sitting with Mr. Lumpkin by the fire. Presently he leaned toward me, and, placing his hand upon my knee, he tenderly exhorted me to seek the Savior. I can not recall his words; but, though they produced no practical effect at the time, yet seventy years have not effaced from my memory that gentle touch, that earnest face and that kind, though brief appeal. And in years long afterwards I have thought how well it would be if our pastors would, in like manner, watch for opportunities to allure the young to Christ. It was that good man, Rev. Jack Lumpkin, who baptized, in 1826, my brother, Judge Junius Hillyer.

In Trail Creek church was an old man, whom I will call Brother A. He was not smart or gifted, though he sometimes tried to preach; but his brethren loved him for his blameless life and his earnest piety. He lived by cultivating a small farm, which yielded barely enough to support his family in a very humble way.

In a neighboring church about ten miles distant was another old man, whom I will call Brother B. With

him I had no personal acquaintance; but I suppose he, too, was in good standing with his church.

It came to pass that Brother B.'s son married Brother A.'s daughter. The young people lived in a cottage to themselves, depending for a support on the products of a small farm. They had not thus lived very long before the husband lost, in the early spring, his only plow nag and he had not money to buy another. Without a horse it was impossible to make a crop.

In this crisis Brother A. gave to his daughter a pony, with which the husband might save his crop. This relieved the situation for the present. But not longer, perhaps, than a few months later, the husband himself died, and left his wife a widow. To add to her affliction, her husband's creditors, by due process of law, under the statute that was in force in those days, levied upon the pony and had him sold at auction. Then Brother B., the father-in-law, at the sale bought the pony and gave it back to the widow of his son.

Now, strange as it may seem, this matter led to a falling out between those two old men. Brother A. had said to various persons that he had given the pony to his daughter. On the other hand, Brother B. claimed that it was he who gave the pony to the widow, and upon this ground Brother A. was charged with falsehood.

This charge became known to the Trail Creek church, and they took Brother A. under dealing. When the trial came on, Brother B. and his daughter-in-law were both on hand. Brother A. was deeply affected. When called on, all he was able to say was that he did give the pony to his daughter, and he should stand to it. At length the young widow was

called on to state who gave her the pony. She replied that her father-in-law had given it to her. This testimony seemed decisive. And poor old Brother A. was convicted of lying, by the testimony of his own daughter. Whereupon he was excluded.

But the female members, almost unanimously, were shocked and grieved by the action of the church. The intelligent sisters, who were from Athens, were especially grieved, because they saw how easily all the facts could be explained so as to show that Brother A.'s assertion was true, as he understood it, while at the same time it was true that Brother B. had also, on another occasion, given the same pony to his daughter-in-law. But there was not a male member present who could make the explanation—that is, no one saw the way out of the difficulty. Brother A. himself, perhaps because he was so overcome by his feelings, could not defend himself.

But those Athens sisters would not give up the matter. In a few days they took counsel together and resolved that at the next conference they would ask permission to express their views of the case.

They then selected Mrs. Franklin, one of their number, to be their spokesman. Accordingly at the next conference, when the place for miscellaneous business was reached, Mrs. Franklin arose and, having obtained permission, addressed the church. I was not present, and will not try to report her speech.

But its effect upon the church was decisive. She made it plain that, if the father-in-law did, after the sale, give back the pony to his daughter-in-law, Brother A., on a previous occasion, had given the same pony to his daughter, and therefore he was not guilty of falsehood.

The brethren saw their mistake, and in a few minutes Brother A. was unanimously restored to fellowship, to the great joy of the church.

Now, who were these sisters that were thus instrumental in vindicating an injured brother and in restoring the harmony of the church? They were of that little group, already referred to, who lived in Athens. One of them was Mrs. Lee Franklin, the mother of Mrs. Governor McDonald, of this State. Another was Mrs. John Cobb, the mother of Generals Howell and T. R. R. Cobb. Two others were my own mother and grandmother. Then there was Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Milledge, the wife of Governor Milledge, though I am not sure that she was on hand at the time of our story. If not, she joined the group only a little later.

Was it not a good work that the sisters accomplished? And does it not prove that the female membership of our churches can occasionally rise above the conventionalities that so embarrass them even in church affairs, and thus prove themselves a blessing to churches and society?

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SECTION TWO.

THE SUNBURY BAPTIST CHURCH—CHARLES O. SCREVEN  
—SAMUEL S. LAW.

Sunbury was settled in 1758, about one hundred and thirty-eight years ago. It was located on the north-east border of Liberty County, upon a high bluff that is washed by Midway River. That bluff fronts nearly east, so that one standing upon it can look down the wide river out into the Atlantic Ocean, twelve miles



distant. A more beautiful view of land and water can hardly be found along our Georgia seaboard.

Sunbury once promised to be more prosperous than it afterwards proved to be. In the beginning of this or the close of the last century, square-rigged vessels were often seen in its beautiful harbor.

But it was not able to compete with its elder sister, Savannah. Moreover, it was soon discovered that the water over its bar was too shallow to admit larger vessels; so its commercial advantages dwindled away to almost nothing.

For these reasons the population never, perhaps, exceeded five hundred white citizens. These were, for the most part, people whose plantations, scattered around on both sides of Midway River, afforded them the means of living together in Sunbury for the sake of social, educational, and religious privileges.

In the year 1801, there was not a Baptist in Sunbury. The religious part of the community were members of the Congregational church that worshiped at Medway Meeting-house ten miles from the village.

*Chas. O. Screven.*

A little later than 1801, Mr. Charles O. Screven became a citizen of Sunbury. He inherited a fine estate. It lay across the river in Bryan County almost in sight of the town. He was a man of fine education, of deep piety, and a Baptist; and he had also been licensed to preach by the Baptist church in Charleston, South Carolina. As he looked around upon the condition of things in Sunbury, his spirit had no rest. He soon made arrangements to preach to the people. This he continued for a season; but being only a licensed



preacher, he concluded to apply for ordination to the church in Charleston of which, I suppose, he was still a member. Accordingly he was ordained by authority of that church, and returned to Sunbury fully authorized to perform all the functions of a gospel minister.

His labors were unremitting. His first converts were several negroes. But there was no Baptist church at that time, perhaps, nearer than Savannah which they could join. He therefore sent for Mr. Clay, who was then pastor of the church in Savannah, to come out to Sunbury and help him with his presence and his counsel. These two ministers examined the colored converts and decided that they should be baptized. And Mr. Screven performed the service. Other colored converts were soon added to these, and in about two years seventy persons were baptized, among whom were only two whites—Mr. Jacob Dunham and his wife.

With these converts, all being colored people except two, the Sunbury Baptist church was constituted. Exactly at what date this was done I do not find distinctly stated, but I infer it was somewhere between 1806 and 1810. The white element in the church began to increase, and in a few years it included a goodly number of intelligent white people.

I did not know Dr. Charles O. Screven personally. He died in July, 1830, and my acquaintance with the Sunbury church began in January, 1832, about eighteen months after his death. But I knew Mrs. Screven, who survived him many years. I knew also his sons and daughters, and many whom he had baptized; and among these was Rev. J. H. Campbell, to whom I am indebted for much of what has been said about Dr. Screven in the foregoing paragraphs.

In 1832 Sunbury was a small village. There were probably not more than two hundred people that were actual residents. These were divided, religiously, between the Congregationalists and Baptists. The former were still members of Medway Church. The Baptists had their meeting-house in the village.

They were not numerous, for, leaving out the colored people, the whole white membership was very small. But of these there were quite a number who richly deserved to be remembered. The oldest one of this interesting group was

*Samuel S. Law.*

There were several branches of the Laws in that region of country who were the kindred of Rev. Samuel Law. They were, however, for the most part, Congregationalists, or Presbyterians, or Episcopalians. Indeed, I am sure that Brother Law was the first of his name that became a Baptist. He was led to do so by a thorough examination of the Scriptures that he might find out what the Lord would have him to do. His wife, it is true, several years before, had joined the Baptist church; but he was very much averse to her doing so. He said to her, "You may do as you please; but remember, when I become a Christian, I shall join another church."

He became a Christian rather late in life. His means enabled him to associate with the "gentry" of the seaboard; and for something more than forty years he was a man of the world. At length, however, he began to think about God and the world to come. He first tried, as I learn from Dr. J. H. Campbell, to make his peace with God by a strict practical morality. He

worked along this line faithfully for a time, but it brought him no comfort. Presently his distress became intense. He discovered that, in spite of his morality, he was a great sinner. He then turned to the Gospel, and with prayer and supplication he sought the way of salvation through its teachings. At last he found peace with God, not by his morality, but by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin. It was then, throwing aside the bias of his early years acquired in the family of his father, who was an Episcopalian, he sought his duty in the Word of God. The result was he applied for baptism at the Baptist church. He was baptized in April, 1815, by Dr. C. O. Screven.

Brother Law's experience (I have given only a sketch of it) is intensely interesting in all its details. We see in it an unregenerate heart, a strong mind, and a resolute will endeavoring to find another path to heaven than the one marked out for us by the New Testament. This is a common mistake with the unconverted. Brother Law's experience illustrates its utter futility. He found his garment of self-righteousness woven of his boasted morality "a filthy rag." But he was led at last to the Rock that was higher than he. Then he could adopt the words of the poet and sing:

"My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name;  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand."

Having joined the church, he became at once an

active Christian—so much so that his brethren soon called him to ordination.

From that time to the end of his life he was a devoted, self-denying and useful preacher. His education was very limited, but he knew his Bible. He knew the God whom it revealed, and comprehended the great scheme of human redemption by the gift of his beloved Son, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." With this preparation he went forth upon a laborious service. He served various churches, and after Doctor Screven's death he was pastor for a year or two of the Sunbury church.

But I would specially emphasize Brother Law's faithful labors among the colored people. He was to them as a messenger from heaven. The churches which he served abounded with them; and those humble people heard him gladly. It has been said of him, by one who knew him well, that his chief design in consenting to be ordained was that he might preach the gospel to the negroes. They had the privilege, it is true, of attending the morning service with the white people—at least as many of them as could find room in the house; but many were excluded for the want of room. To meet this difficulty he would often preach in the afternoon to the negroes only, and then they would fill the house to its utmost capacity. We do not know and can never know till we get to heaven how many children of the "Dark Continent" this great and good man led to Jesus. Such was the work of Samuel Spry Law, one of the worthy men of the Sunbury Church who deserves to be held in affectionate remembrance, along with the sainted Screven, by Georgia Baptists.

## SECTION THREE.

SUNBURY BAPTIST CHURCH CONTINUED.—

JACOB DUNHAM.

As I have stated, I became acquainted with the Sunbury Baptist church in the month of January, 1832. I had been elected by the Board of Trustees to take charge of the Sunbury Academy, and was on hand for that purpose. This brought me into intimate relations with the patrons of the school, who represented nearly every family in the village. I also became a member, by letter, of the Sunbury church, and was identified with it for nearly the whole of that year; so my opportunity to know the church was about as good as could be desired. The pastor of the church was Rev. Josiah S. Law, the oldest son of Rev. Samuel S. Law. Of this young brother I will speak further on. I wish first to give some account of the church itself.

It was the rule of the Sunbury church to have public worship in the meeting-house every Sunday. The pastor preached on two Sundays every month; on two, he visited other churches in the county. One of our Sundays, when the pastor was absent, was supplied by his father, of whom a brief account has been given. This arrangement left one Sunday without a preacher. But the church met for worship on that day all the same. Some member of the church, by previous arrangement, would conduct the service. It included the usual exercises that were observed when the pastor was present. The service was opened with a hymn, and many sweet voices joined in the singing. It was good to listen to them. Then followed a prayer by the leader of the meeting, or by some brother whom

he called on for that service. After prayer, another hymn was sung. Then followed the sermon. The leader had selected from some volume of printed sermons one which he judged would be appropriate for that occasion. This sermon he read with a clear, earnest, and reverent utterance, and it was reverently listened to by the people. After reading the sermon, if the leader chose, it was in order for him to emphasize the thoughts of the sermon with words of his own; and this was sometimes done.

This habit, or custom, of the church was already established when I joined it. How long it had been observed I do not know. I soon found, however, that I was expected to bear my share of its burdens, and I tried to do it as well as I could.

Besides this extra Sunday service, the church, of course, had its weekly prayer-meeting. At these meetings the pastor was usually present, and conducted the worship. The prayer-meetings were generally well attended.

We might conclude, a priori, that such habits, supplementing the rich and earnest preaching of our beloved pastor and his venerable father, could not fail to be followed by good results.

One effect was, there were some conversions. Not many, for the community was very small, and the greater part of them were already connected with the church in Sunbury or with the Congregationalist church at Medway. Still there were some who were brought into our fold. The place of baptism was at the foot of the bluff that afforded an extensive view of the beautiful bay. On such occasions it seemed as if the whole population of the village were gathered on

that bluff to witness the impressive ceremony that was going on at its base in the waters of the incoming tide. It was a scene to make glad the angels of Heaven.

Another effect of this habit above mentioned was to diffuse a religious atmosphere over the entire community. I do not mean that all were Christians. There were some in Sunbury, as well as everywhere else, who made no profession of piety—who were people of the world. But even these rendered an outward respect to religion that showed that they recognized its presence, and, in some degree at least, appreciated its value. They associated freely and pleasantly with religious people, and were often, I may say usually, attendants upon the preached gospel. This religious influence was felt also in the Sunday-school. It included the children of both denominations, and was well attended.

Another fact which, by the grace of God, signaled the Sunbury church deserves to be noticed. While the white members of the church scarcely ever exceeded thirty persons at any one time, yet, during the first thirty years of its existence, there went out from its fold nine Baptist preachers. I will give their names, as well as I can, in the order of time: Jacob Dunham, Samuel S. Law, James Shannon, J. H. Campbell, Josiah S. Law, Edward Stevens, James O. Screven and Adam T. Holmes. To this list I think should be added the name of Brother Carlos Stevens (who makes the ninth), for, although he entered the ministry a few years later, yet he was raised up under the influences of the Sunbury church, and I think was baptized into its membership.

Brother Shannon, the reader will remember, was al-



ready a minister of the Presbyterian church; but among the causes that providentially led him to make a thorough examination of the baptismal question, one was certainly the influence of the Baptist church which he found in Sunbury.

I have not placed my own name in the foregoing list, because my connection with the Sunbury church was perhaps too short to give me a right to do so. But, in my own mind, I am clearly conscious that my association with that godly people, short as it was, did much to deepen my impressions toward the pulpit.

The facts above stated present to us a marvelous record (of only thirty years) for a church of less than forty white members. It may serve to increase our interest in this record to notice more particularly some of the brethren whose names have been mentioned. The first on the list is the name of

*Jacob Dunham.*

Brother Dunham and his wife had the distinction of being the first white persons baptized into the Sunbury church. This occurred in 1806. In a few years Brother Dunham began to preach. My acquaintance with him began in 1832. The incidents of his life I can not relate, but the manner of his life and the character of the man it was easy to learn, for he was well known far and near over the counties on the seaboard in which he labored. His education was very limited and he was poor in this world's goods, and yet he yielded to the call of the Holy Spirit and preached the gospel almost without compensation, in the highways and the hedges. His labors were chiefly devoted to the colored people and to the white settlers that were living in the pine woods which lay back of the richer



lands of the seaboard. It is said that he would work on his farm during the week till the time came to meet one of his appointments; then, if the place could be reached by land, he would saddle his plow horse and ride sometimes ten, fifteen, or twenty miles to fill his engagement. But if the place was beyond the river, or upon an island on the coast, then he would take his little boat, and like the disciples on the Sea of Galilee, row himself across the waters to preach the gospel to the poor negroes on some plantation. Nor were his labors in vain. It is not improbable that during his life he baptized more than a thousand of his humble hearers, including both black and white. Such was the manner of his life.

His character was held in high esteem by all. He had not the learning and culture of Doctor Mallary, but he was like him in the depth and fervor of his piety. Jesus dwelt in his heart by faith, and he was rooted and grounded in love. Dear old man! How bright will he shine in the day of Christ! I love to contemplate the life and character of such a man. It makes me desire to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus. May this be the effect upon every one who reads this brief reminiscence.

It only remains to say that Brother Dunham raised a large family, which was a household of faith. Only one of his children is living, Mrs. Ashley, now (1896) residing in Atlanta. She is a member of the Second Baptist church. Some of his descendants, however, are still to be found in different sections of the State. May they all attain to the spiritual stature of their sainted ancestor.

## CHAPTER VII.

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### SECTION ONE.

#### JOSIAH SPRY LAW.

BROTHER Law wanted about one month of being twenty-four years old when I first met him in January, 1832. He had obtained a good classical and English education at the Sunbury Academy under the instruction of Rev. James Shannon. He had also taken a full course of instruction in the Theological Seminary at Newton, Massachusetts. He was, therefore, well equipped intellectually for the work to which he had devoted his life. His ordination took place soon after his return from Newton. It may be interesting to notice that at the same time, and by the same presbytery, two other ministers were ordained with Brother Law. These were Rev. Charles B. Jones and Dr. Jesse H. Campbell.

Brother Law succeeded his father, Rev. Samuel S. Law, as pastor of the Sunbury church, and had but recently entered upon his work when I became acquainted with him. He was pastor of the church, and I was rector of the academy. We soon became intimate associates and life-long friends.

He was endowed by nature with a good intelligence, a clear perception and a sound judgment. To these qualities must be added a fluent speech and a remarkably correct elocution; and all these natural gifts were well developed by a good degree of literary and theological culture.

In his person he was rather small in stature, but symmetrically built with good limbs and muscular fiber; so he was active, strong, and capable of enduring much physical effort. He was indeed a handsome young man.

In his manners he was easy and graceful. In conversation he was genial, affable and kind. He was not averse to pleasantry, wit and humor, and yet his religious sentiments were, like the chords of a musical instrument, always ready to respond in harmony to every touch of spiritual thought. These qualities made him a welcome guest in every social circle. The young and the gay could approach him without reserve or embarrassment; the old and serious found in him an earnest and sympathizing companion; and the timid Christian, troubled with doubts and fears, could find in him ready words of counsel and of comfort.

It was, after all, in the pulpit that Brother Law appeared to the best advantage. He knew how to grasp the meaning of his text. And when he had grasped it for himself he knew how to present his meaning to his hearers clearly and forcibly. This he accomplished by a carefully prepared analysis. His topics were well chosen and appropriately arranged, so as to bring out distinctly the teachings of the text. When this was done, he knew how to apply those teachings to the wants of his hearers, and by earnest words of exhortation and persuasion to enforce their acceptance of them in their hearts and the observance of them in their lives. He was an excellent and interesting preacher. Though he often read his sermons, yet such was the correctness of his elocution that his delivery was never dry; his audience listened to him with inter-

est and pleasure. His fluency qualified him to speak extemporaneously with great effect; and thus he was doubly equipped for the work of the ministry.

Several times during the year that I was with him in Sunbury there were baptisms. On one occasion he had the pleasure of baptizing a younger brother and at the same time, or on another occasion, he baptized a younger sister. These two were, with himself, the children of his father's second wife, who, years before, had gone home to heaven. In the presence of a large congregation assembled on the bluff already mentioned, as he was about to baptize one of these precious relatives, he paused a moment, and looking towards the sky exclaimed with tender feeling: "If the redeemed in heaven are permitted to know what is taking place on earth, a sainted mother is now looking down with joy upon the scene before us. She sees her darling child about to put on Christ by baptism." Oh, there is something so lovely in a New-Testament baptism! It is the place where one who has died to the love of sin comes to be buried, symbolically, with Jesus, that he may rise with him to a new and a higher life. It is an epoch in his life which he never forgets. Other memories may be sweet, but, "like the music of Caryle," are often "mournful to the soul." But the memory of one's baptism is not only sweet—it is often, like the music of the angels, full of rapture and joy.

Brother Law spent most of his life in Sunbury. For a short time he was pastor of the First Baptist church in Macon and afterwards in Savannah. But he seemed to prefer to labor in his native county. He soon returned to Sunbury and again became pastor of the church at that place.

His labors, however, extended to other churches within his reach. The white membership of those churches was small, but the colored members were very numerous. Like his father, Brother Law felt deeply the spiritual wants of the colored people. It was interesting at our communion seasons in Sunbury to look up at the galleries that extended round the sides of the auditorium all filled with negroes. They were there to hear, with their white friends, the preached gospel, and then to take with them the memorial symbols of our Savior's dying love. While the deacons were carrying round the cup, Brother Law would return to the pulpit, whose elevation brought him nearly on a level with the gallery, and there preach almost another sermon specially adapted to the needs of his colored hearers.

The planters on the seaboard of Georgia were generally pleased to have ministers, who were willing to do it, to come and preach to their negroes. Some, perhaps a majority, went so far as to build a house devoted to religious services. It was called the "prayer-house." In that house the negroes held their religious meetings at night as often as they pleased.

This opened a wide field of labor for white ministers who happened to be in the neighborhood. We have already seen how Brother Dunham and Brother Samuel S. Law labored among the colored people. Brother Josiah walked in the footsteps of his venerable father. I have known him to ride several miles after supper to fill an appointment in one of these prayer-houses. I was with him in one of these evening excursions. We found the house well filled. His mode of conducting the services was just the thing for his humble auditors.

He was a gentle shepherd feeding the lambs of the fold.

Brother Law's fame was not confined to the narrow region in which he lived. In 1839 I met him at the Georgia Baptist Convention at Richland Church, in Twiggs County. On that occasion I heard him preach a magnificent sermon to a large and appreciative audience. From that hour he ranked among the best preachers in Georgia.

He was once offered, by the Board of Trustees, the chair of theology in Mercer University. But after due consideration he declined the office. He was not willing to give up his regular ministry, among the people whom he loved, for scholastic honors. He preferred to continue upon the field where he had been so useful and where he was so much beloved. Everybody who knew him loved him, especially the colored people whom he served so faithfully. It is said that just a few days before he was stricken with the malady that ended his life, he baptized at one place thirty negroes, while sixty others, perhaps at another place, were awaiting his services.

But death intervened; he went home to die—to die in the meridian of his manhood. Strange that such a life should be so short! His death occurred in 1853, when he was only about forty-five years old. He rests from his labors and his works have followed him. He left a widow and a large family of children to mourn his loss. And thousands of sympathizing friends in Georgia were ready to mingle their tears with the tears of his weeping household.

May the Lord help the readers of this humble tribute to his memory to gather spiritual strength and fidelity from his example.

## SECTION TWO.

JESSE H. CAMPBELL.

Rev. Jesse H. Campbell was another of the group of ministers sent forth from the Sunbury church to labor among Georgia Baptists.

Doctor Campbell was born in January, 1807, in McIntosh County, but his boyhood and youth were spent in Liberty County, where his father had a small estate about five miles from Sunbury. It was in the academy at Sunbury that he received his academic education, under the instruction of Professor James Shannon, who was an eminent teacher. It was here, too, that the Lord called this young student to repentance towards God and to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. This brings us to the time of his conversion.

He was only sixteen years old when that important event in his life occurred. We learn from himself, in a letter addressed to Rev. Walker Lewis, of the Methodist Church, that his father was not a professor of religion, but he had a devotedly pious mother. No doubt she had often prayed for her darling boy. I can not do better, at this point, than to quote Brother Campbell's own account of his conversion, as reported by his personal friend, Mr. W. Lewis, from the letter above referred to. He said:

"I learned to be a profane swearer from childhood, and by the time I entered my sixteenth year I was impiously, awfully profane. I was a pupil in Sunbury at the time, and in the fall of that year God revived his work in the Baptist church, the only one in the place, and the first revival I ever attended. In the midst of the excitement, the town was visited by a Methodist



minister by the name of Winn, who died soon after of yellow fever in Charleston. He was the first Methodist whom I ever heard, and I was greatly aroused under his preaching. Contrary to my purpose I was constrained to remain to the night service. It was the first time I had ever heard the anxious invited forward to prayer. I was the first to embrace the opportunity, and was instantly followed by many others. Not many days elapsed before I found peace in believing in Christ, and joined the church soon thereafter."

This account of his conversion is very concise. We are left to infer what must have been the struggles and anxieties which he felt under the sudden and deep convictions that had possessed his heart. And we are left to infer how he was led step by step to peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But we are left in no doubt of the genuineness of his conversion, as the following incident will show :

The very night after his baptism in the morning, his mother called upon him to conduct family worship. This was a fearful trial for a boy of only sixteen summers, and for a church member less than one day old. At first, as might be expected, he would have preferred to be excused; but his mother overcame him, his sisters too encouraged him, and even their lady guests did the same thing, and his father also, though not a church member, had given his consent. His scruples gave way under such pressure, and he resolved to try. I will here let him tell the rest of the story himself :

"Trembling from head to foot, I went forward. Falling upon my knees, my tongue was loosed, the fountains of my heart were broken up, and I poured forth such a prayer as melted all in hearing. My



father was sobbing like a wearied child; my sisters and their friends were overwhelmed; the servants in the portico were weeping aloud, and my poor consumptive mother had as much of God's goodness as she could bear. From that night my father was a changed man (though he never became a church member); my sisters and their guests were soon converted; and the poor servants came for their full share of the saving grace of God."

What an argument for family worship might be drawn from this incident in the early life of our Brother Campbell! Alas, how many thousands of fathers and mothers allow the streams of living water that flow from the family altar to run dry from sheer neglect! Reader, it is not enough that you should attend the public exercises of the house of God. David did that most faithfully; but when he had offered his sacrifices at the Tabernacle, we learn that he returned home "to bless his household." The mode he adopted, we know not; but the words clearly imply a religious service of some kind with his family. We can not overestimate the moral power of family prayer.

That prayer in his father's house was the germ of Brother Campbell's ministerial life. He began almost immediately to take part in the social meetings of the church by leading in prayer and by exhorting his young friends as he had opportunity. So zealous was he that he won throughout the section in which he lived the title of "the boy preacher." These youthful efforts soon culminated in a desire to devote his life to the ministry. To this end, when about eighteen years old, he went to Athens to complete his education at the State University. In this, however, he was

disappointed by the unexpected death of his father. He was the only living son, and he was compelled to return home that he might take care of his three sisters and settle up his father's small estate.

Just here occurred an incident that deserves to be mentioned, because it illustrates the man. When the commissioners were about to divide the little property, he instructed them to divide it into only three parts and to give it all to his sisters. They, indeed, earnestly protested against his giving up his share, but he would not be moved from his purpose. He gave the whole property to his sisters. What an example of a noble, unselfish, and loving brother!

Having closed up his domestic business he proceeded to arrange for his life-work. It has already been stated elsewhere that he was ordained at Sunbury in 1830 along with Rev. J. S. Law and Rev. Charles B. Jones. He then left the seaboard and for a time studied theology with Doctor Sherwood, near Eatonton, in Putnam County. But it was not long before he was fully engaged in preaching, and he spent nearly the whole of his ministerial life in Middle Georgia.

My knowledge of Brother Campbell's labors covers a period of more than fifty years. I found him to be a man of great firmness of purpose, of ardent piety, of unfaltering zeal and of excellent judgment, especially in guiding, as a skillful shepherd, the several flocks committed to his charge. His preaching was instructive, exhortatory and persuasive. He could preach the doctrines of grace as Baptists hold them; and yet he could make the sinner feel his personal responsibility in the matter of his own salvation.

Brother Campbell's devotion to the ministry was

exclusive of all secular occupations that would interfere with his preaching the gospel. At the same time, he was an earnest advocate of all the benevolent enterprises in which his brethren were engaged. He loved Mercer University. He loved the cause of temperance. He loved the Sunday-school. And he loved the cause of modern missions. In all these matters he worked with characteristic zeal and perseverance, because he knew them to be subsidiary to the success of the preached gospel.

Brother Campbell was one of the most active agents in the organization of the Central Association. It was organized in the interest of all the benevolent institutions of that day. And it soon made itself an important factor in promoting them all; and in this work Doctor Campbell was always and everywhere conspicuous.

If my memory is not at fault, it was Doctor Campbell who first suggested and labored to bring about the conference of ministers at Forsyth in 1836, in order to allay, if possible, the strife between Missionary Baptists and their opponents. The effects were not apparent at first, but soon a better feeling was noticed, and anti-mission doctrine gradually declined till its advocates were reduced to a small minority.

I must not fail to notice Brother Campbell's last and perhaps his most Christlike work. It was in his old age. He had retired for rest to live with his son in Columbus, Georgia. But he soon found work to do among the poor of the city and its suburbs. Like his Master, he went about among them feeding the hungry and tending the sick and preaching the gospel to gathering multitudes in the open air. I do not know if ever

in the prime of his life he did a better work than he did in his city mission at Columbus. It seems the extensive factories and other workshops in and near by Columbus had brought together a large number of people who, like millions of others, had to earn subsistence by daily toil as day-laborers. Their opportunity to hear the gospel was very limited. In this matter they were hardly better off than they would have been if there had been no churches in the city. Admitting a few exceptional cases, as a rule these poor people were practically without the gospel. Besides this privation many of them would sometimes be in want of the necessities of life, and some would be sick. Such was the field that was found by Brother Campbell.

He was then seventy years of age. He had given up his last pastorate. For nearly fifty years he had labored with active zeal to help forward every good work over all sections of our State; and the good which he accomplished can not be estimated in the terms of earthly measures. But at last this aged servant retired to the home of his son.

Was it because the time had come that he should drop his mantle upon the shoulders of that beloved son? He may have thought so, for I remember the words he spoke when many years before at Penfield he was about to baptize that son. As they stood together in the water, he said in substance: "This is the last of my sons to be baptized, and my hope is that when I have passed away he may wear my mantle."

But the time had not come. God had a work for him to do in his old age. For eleven years he carried on his mission in the manner already described, among

the laboring people about Columbus. The success of his work may be inferred from the high appreciation in which he was held by the people of the city. All classes of people respected and loved him. The city council, several years before his death, gave him a deed to a beautiful lot in the cemetery; and it was their desire that he should be buried on that lot. In this desire the citizens concurred. So it came to pass, when, in 1888, he had breathed his last, yielding to this general desire, his relatives consented that his remains should lie in the lot which the city had given him. By the contributions of the community, a neat monument adorns the grave where he sleeps. Such was the honor paid to this faithful servant of Jesus.

I have not spoken of Brother Campbell's labors in the Confederate army as a voluntary chaplain. Of course, I could tell nothing about them from my personal knowledge, but I learn that his efforts among the soldiers were immensely useful. It is said that he was instrumental in leading hundreds of them to the knowledge of Jesus. And knowing him as well as I did, I feel sure that there were many incidents in his experiences in the camps of the soldiers that would be intensely interesting if we only knew them. But I must leave to some surviving pious soldier, if such there be, who was an eye-witness of Brother Campbell's spiritual campaigns, to tell the story.

Brother Campbell was twice married. He raised several children, two of whom became ministers—Rev. Charles M. and Rev. Abner B. Campbell. The former was for many years pastor of the church at Athens. From that place he went to Texas and became pastor

of the church, I think, at Cleburne. But he has passed away. Brother Abner B. still lives and is now serving the church at Troy, in Alabama.

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SECTION THREE.

ADAM T. HOLMES.

This brother was born in Sunbury and raised to mature manhood under the influences of that remarkable village. He joined the Baptist church when he was twenty years old. For a time he was a young man of much promise as a church member. He would pray and exhort in religious meetings, and thus great hopes were entertained of his future usefulness.

But, somehow, after a few years he fell away from his Christian profession and lost the fellowship of his brethren. When I became acquainted with him in 1832 he was not a church member, and seemed to be given up to the love and service of the world. I found him to be well educated.

Though estranged from the church, yet he held a pew, and generally was an attendant upon public worship. He continued to associate with religious people, and had among them many personal friends. He was about seven years my senior; but he was classed as a young man, and he was a conspicuous figure in the group of young men who were at that time in Sunbury. A more interesting group could hardly be found in any community. Their relations to each other were intimate and friendly, resulting in life-long friendships and, with the majority of them, in Christian fellowship as well.

Gradually the winter of 1832 wore away, and spring with its blushing flowers clothed the earth with beauty. In the meantime I had become intimate with Mr. Holmes. We were often together, sometimes at his home, a few miles from the village, and sometimes at my lodgings, or at social gatherings in town.

One moonlight night, perhaps in May, or early in June, Holmes and I were walking across the wide common that lay between the village and the neighboring woods. We were walking as I thought only for recreation and for social enjoyment. But he, it seemed, had another motive. We had gone only a short way, when he said, "I want to talk to you this evening upon a subject of deep interest to me." He then told me the story of his religious life, and of his unfortunate lapse from the fellowship of the church. He made no complaint of bad treatment by the brethren; but for some weeks he had been reviewing his case and felt sincerely that by his own conduct he had placed himself in an unhappy position. Some half dozen years of his young manhood had been worse than wasted. He therefore was anxious to be restored to the church. I heard his story with interest, and gave him all the encouragement and advice that I was able to do at so early a period in my own religious life—I was hardly a year old as a church member.

A few weeks later, Mr. Holmes having consulted, no doubt, other brethren, presented himself before the conference of the church to ask them to restore him to membership. He made a full confession of his errors and avowed his desire to live a better life. The church forgave the penitent backslider and extended to him



once more the right hand of fellowship. It was a joyful day, and he became dearer to me than ever.

Not long after this he came to the up-country to engage in teaching, and in the course of one or two years he was ordained to the ministry. The scene of his labors was in Middle and Southwest Georgia. He grew in the ministry very rapidly, so that his services were in demand. I heard Dr. C. D. Mallery, who knew him well, say that he regarded Brother Holmes decidedly one of the best preachers we then had in Georgia.

He was not only an able preacher, but was interested in all our benevolent enterprises and an advocate of the temperance reformation. He was made a member of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University, in which position he took an active part, and it was Mercer that conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Another important position to which he was called was the presidency of the Baptist Female College in Cuthbert. All these things show the high appreciation to which this dear brother attained among the Baptists of Georgia.

The last time I met Brother Holmes was at Newnan, Georgia, where the Baptist convention was then in session. He met me with tender affection. I could perceive that his health was failing, and it was but a few months before he passed away. I learn that he entered the valley of death in full assurance of faith. He left a widow and one son to mourn his loss. I know so little of their subsequent history that I need not try to sketch it. I will only add that Mrs. Holmes was of the Hampton family of South Carolina. She lived with



Brother Holmes more than thirty years. She was a lady of culture and of piety. I suppose she has ere this joined her husband in heaven.

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## SECTION FOUR.

## OLIVER STEVENS.

Mr. Oliver Stevens was a native of Connecticut. He came to Georgia when quite a young man, and settled in Liberty County, and became a citizen of Sunbury. He was a Presbyterian, but like many others he was led to investigate the Scriptures on the subject of baptism, and soon discovered that they distinctly teach that believers only are the proper subjects of baptism, and that immersion is its only Scriptural mode. He therefore became a Baptist, and when I first knew him he was a deacon of the Sunbury church.

His wife was a daughter of Deacon Peter Winn, also of Liberty County. She was indeed a "helpmeet" for just such a man as was her husband. They were united, not only by the ties of conjugal affection, but also by the bonds of Christian fellowship. In their house the family altar was a fixture, and morning and evening there were brought to it offerings of prayer and praise that sent up to heaven the incense of the worship which is "in spirit and in truth." Their children were as olive-plants around their table, yielding, for both parents, a full supply of the pure oil of filial respect and love. I never knew a happier family. It was a beautiful illustration of the Scripture which says: "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Such was the happy family of which Deacon Oliver Stevens was the honored head and father. Let us now consider him as a church member.

He was the leading deacon in the church. This office he filled with patient fidelity and with great wisdom. He had the confidence of the entire church, including the colored members (perhaps several hundred), who regarded him as a true friend and a safe adviser. In addition to his service as deacon he was also the leader of the singing in the prayer-meetings and in public worship. And then he was also the superintendent of the Sunday-school. This important interest he managed with the same perseverance and prudence that distinguished him in his deaconship. You behold in Brother Stevens a model church member, whose light shone with unflickering steadiness along all the lines of religious duty and of church work.

But as a citizen he was no less useful than as a church member. He was not rich, but he had enough to support his family, and to give to his children a good education, and to train them in such culture and refinement as would qualify them for the amenities of social life.

And his good-will extended beyond his own household. He was everybody's friend, and everybody loved him, for he was ever ready to do an act of kindness to any one who needed it. He was not only a model church member, but a model man in every relation of life.

My words may seem to be exaggerated, but they fail to express adequately my appreciation of the beautiful character of Deacon Oliver Stevens.

I never knew a more completely rounded character. Its dominating element was faith in God, but in obedience to an inspired precept, he added to his faith the golden chain of Christian graces—virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. And because these graces were in him, he was “neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

But to whom belongs the glory of such a character? Not to the man himself. Brother Stevens would not have claimed it. No, the glory of such a character belongs to the indwelling Christ. It is his light that shines in the good man’s life. Brother Stevens let that light so shine in his own life that all men could see it and glorify the God who gave it—the Christ that dwelt within him.

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SECTION FIVE.

EDWARD A. STEVENS.

If I had space I should be glad to notice all of Brother Stevens’ children, so far at least as I have knowledge of their subsequent history. Several of them were my personal friends and most highly appreciated by me.

I had the pleasure of meeting Brother Edward A. Stevens in Sunbury in 1832. He was only about eighteen years of age, and at that time he was a student of Brown University. He had come home to spend his vacation. He was a very devoted Christian, and was looking forward to the ministry. It required but a little time for me to learn to love him. His

earnest, pure, spiritual religion won me at once; I delighted in his society, and we became, I have reason to think, mutual friends. He was four years my junior in his life, but many years my senior in the depth of his piety. The indwelling Christ was already brightly shining in his young manhood. This is no fancy portrait. I speak what I believed then and what I believe now. Sweet is the memory which I have cherished of that young brother.

But his vacation closed and he once more bade farewell to his friends that he might return to the University and complete his course. This he did and then entered the Theological Seminary at Newton Centre in order to qualify himself more especially for the great work to which he had consecrated his life.

When he had finished this course also, he again returned to Georgia for a few months. It was in 1837. I was once more residing with my mother in the old homestead near Athens, Georgia, and I was then serving the Baptist church of that place as its pastor. I had learned somehow that Brother E. A. Stevens was in Georgia, and was expecting to visit Athens. I did not know when to look for him. There was only the beginning of railroads then. He had to come by a mail-coach, or by private conveyance.

But one day I received from the post-office a letter postmarked Boston, directed to Mr. E. A. Stevens, care of Mr. S. G. Hillyer, Athens, Georgia. I knew then my friend was coming, and could not be far away. Sure enough, perhaps the next day, he came and was a guest at our house. We gave him a cordial welcome, and I gave him what he no doubt valued above

all else just then, the letter in my care. It was from his affianced bride, as he soon informed me.

He spent several days with us, and became acquainted with many families of our church, as well as our own. He had by this time fully made up his mind to become a foreign missionary to Burma. It will be remembered that in 1837 the Missionary Baptists of the whole United States were working together under the Triennial Convention for missions; and the Foreign Board, of which our own Dr. Jesse Mercer was president, was located in Boston. Brother Stevens having been accepted by the Board preferred to be ordained in his native State. Accordingly arrangements were made to have him ordained at the meeting of the Convention which took place that year (1837) during the first week in May, at Ruckersville, Elbert County. He had timed his visit to Athens in harmony with this arrangement. He therefore left us in time to meet his engagement at Ruckersville, where he, a Georgia Baptist, was ordained to preach the gospel to the heathen in Burma. The following autumn was the time fixed for his departure.

Consider what he was leaving. He was leaving one of the happiest homes on this globe. He was leaving his father and mother, his brothers and sisters in whose loving affection he had lived. Then he was renouncing all the comforts of an advanced civilization, and all the possible emoluments and honors that might await him in his native land.

Consider again why he made all these sacrifices. Was he foolish to do it? Was he throwing away his young life? Reader, I wish you could have heard him answer these questions himself. It was my privilege to learn

his reason for what so many would call an act of folly. We sat together one pleasant afternoon, and we were talking of his mission. He knew what he was leaving. He knew the dreadful exchanges that he was making; but none of these things moved him. His eye beamed with tenderness and his face was perfectly yet seriously tranquil. It was the love of Jesus that was moving him to go. With love in his heart he was fortified against every assault of the tempter. Presently he said in substance, in a low, gentle voice, "O Brother Hillyer, I am so happy! It is sweet to work for Jesus." And a pleasant smile lighted up his features.

Reader, when you are asked for missionary money, think of this young man and let his zeal for Christ quicken your liberality.

I can not tell the story of his life in Burma. It must suffice to say that he gave the whole of it to his mission. His labors were abundantly useful as long as he lived, and as a faithful soldier he died at his post, and he has no doubt received his crown of victory from the hand of the King whom he served.

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SECTION SIX.

JAMES O. SCREVEN.

James O. Screven was the oldest son of Rev. Charles O. Screven, who was the founder of the Sunbury church and its first pastor. His son, James O., was born in February, 1804. Early in the twenties, he was a student of the State University. I remember hearing him mentioned as a gay, pleasure-loving and rather wild young man by the boys with whom I

associated. I think I met him once at the post-office in Athens, but he was a student far advanced in his college course, eighteen or nineteen years old, while I was in the grammar school, and nearly five and a half years younger.

About eight or nine years later, in January, 1832, I met him in Sunbury. He then wanted only one month of being twenty-eight years old. He was no longer a wild young man. Soon after he returned from college he saw the error of his ways and earnestly sought the Savior, and was enabled to hope in his mercy. Accordingly he consecrated himself to a religious life in baptism. His subsequent life gave full proof of the genuineness of his conversion. He was not a preacher in 1832 nor do I know when he was licensed or ordained, but it could not have been many years later.

What made him a preacher?

This question deserves to be considered. Brother Screven was possessed of a fine estate. He did not need the meagre emoluments of the ministry to supply his wants. Then his high social position was on a level with the very best people in the community around him. And then, to fill to the brim the measure of his temporal prosperity, he was blessed with the love of an intelligent, cultured and devoted wife who had come to be his companion for life. Looking at his case from a worldly standpoint, what more could he desire to insure his social and domestic happiness?

Under these circumstances we may well conclude that it was no worldly motive that made him a preacher. It was the love of Jesus and the love of souls.



He saw around him a lowly race who for the most part knew not God, and who had no hope of heaven. It was among these people that James Screven commenced his ministerial labors. It is said that he spent seven years in preaching to the negroes in Bryan County and on Ossabaw and St. Catherine's Islands. And it is not likely that he received any compensation for his services.

But other fields were opened up for him. Nevertheless, it seemed to be his special calling to preach for the most part to those who, without him, would have been destitute of the gospel.

His ministry covered a period of about thirty years of earnest and faithful labor. We can never know the good he accomplished till we get to heaven. He was a useful man and a lovely character. He died in 1864, just about sixty years old. His death was a triumph. His hope was undimmed by a single shadow and he spoke with rapture of his desire to be with Jesus. Thus this good man died. His wife and three children, one son and two daughters, were left to mourn his loss.

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SECTION SEVEN.

CARLOS W. STEVENS.

This dear brother was, I think, next to the youngest son of Deacon Oliver Stevens. He was, in 1832, one of my pupils in Sunbury, but belonged to the primary class, being not more than eight or nine years old. He was raised under the influence of a pious father and mother and in the religious atmosphere of Sunbury. Under these favorable conditions he was brought into the church at an early age.



After my departure from Sunbury he continued to enjoy the advantages of good academic instruction till he was about nineteen years old. I was then, in 1843, teaching at Scottsborough, near Milledgeville, and, needing an assistant, I employed Carlos to come and help me. This he did most satisfactorily. Being anxious, however, to prosecute his education beyond his academic range, at the close of the year he left me and went first to the State University but afterwards to Mercer University at Penfield. In both these institutions he was a most diligent student and made fine progress.

About the year 1853 he married a lady of Hancock County and for a time was pastor, if I remember rightly, of the church in Sparta, and perhaps of other neighboring churches. He was afterwards principal of a high school. But in these positions I did not know him personally. All that I ever heard of him, however, bore witness to the very high esteem in which he was held by all who knew him. He was certainly doing a good work, and giving promise of a useful life.

But his career was brief. In the prime of his manhood he was taken from us. What he might have achieved we know not, for he left his work unfinished.

The lesson to be learned is found in the character of this dear young man. Of his character I can speak with confidence, for I knew him. He seemed to be endowed with true and unaffected modesty. It was manifested first in his freedom from self-conceit—he waited for others to find out his worth. It was manifest again in his sincere aversion to all forms of vulgarity. This he shunned as he would avoid contact

with outward defilement. Another element that gave beauty to his character was his docility. He delighted to sit at the feet of the elders and listen to their words of wisdom. And yet he was by no means a mere echo-man. He could think for himself. But his beautiful docility was most conspicuous in his child-like submission to the teachings of the Bible. And this reveals a third element in his character—his unwavering faith. He believed the Bible as a little child believes the words of its mother. He would not, as some do, question either the wisdom or the goodness of its teachings. Where he could not see, he was willing to walk by faith.

When to these primary virtues we add his pure integrity, his truthfulness, his high sense of honor, his far-reaching benevolence and his ardent desire to lead others to Christ, we have before us a character which the angels would love. Such a character was Brother Carlos W. Stevens.

Here I take leave of the Sunbury church. I hope that my reminiscences of the nine ministers whom it sent forth to work for the Baptists of Georgia have not been uninteresting to my readers. May the Lord help them to emulate the virtues and the zeal of the noble and the good who have passed before us over the river.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### SECTION ONE.

#### SARDIS CHURCH.

THIS church is in the northwestern part of Wilkes County, about ten or twelve miles from Washington, the principal town of the county. It may be regarded as a fair sample of the Baptist churches that are located in the rural districts of Georgia. Nevertheless, it stands among its sister churches distinguished by a few facts that deserve special notice. First of these may be mentioned its age.

Sardis church was constituted in 1788—a hundred and nine years ago. Through all that period, its spiritual vitality, by the grace of God, has kept it as one of the golden candlesticks, whose light has never been extinguished. Three generations of saints in regular succession have already come and gone, and the fourth is now far on the way to the heavenly Canaan. The present membership no doubt recall with something like veneration the memory of spiritual predecessors to whose responsibility no less than to their privileges they have now succeeded. O brethren of Sardis! have you felt, as you ought, these responsibilities? Cheered by the memories of the past, and enlightened by the “Sun of righteousness” now shining with constantly increasing splendor, will you not arise and trim your lamps and “let your light so shine

that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven?"

Another thing that gives distinction to Sardis church is the fact that through its hundred and nine years it has had but seven pastors. Rev. Jesse Mercer, with whose assistance the church was constituted, appears to have been its first pastor. He was then (1788) in the strength of his early manhood. After serving the church about twenty-five years he was succeeded by Rev. Jeremiah Reeves. In 1817 he was succeeded by his brother, Rev. Malachi Reeves, who served till 1827. He was followed by Rev. Enoch Callaway, who served the church till he died in 1859—thirty-two years after his appointment. Rev. P. F. Burgess served until 1863, then L. R. L. Jennings to 1870. He was succeeded by Rev. B. M. Callaway, who has already held the pastorate twenty-six years, and it is hoped that he may continue to hold it many years longer.

The average time, only to the present date, is very nearly sixteen years for each one. But if the present incumbent should hold on ten or fifteen years longer, which is not improbable, the average would be largely increased.

This is indeed a remarkable record, alike honorable to the church and to the men who served it, for such a record clearly indicates that the pastors must have been wise and prudent in watching over the church, and able and effective in the preaching of the gospel. On the other hand it indicates that the members were free from a fault-finding spirit, from a capricious criticism and from a love of novelty. Having the good sense to appreciate justly the worth of their ministers, they gave them cordially their confidence and their

love. It was therefore easy for them to live together, till some providential cause should make separation desirable.

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SECTION TWO.

REV. JEREMIAH REEVES.\*

This good brother was born in North Carolina, in 1772. Soon after the Revolutionary War his father moved his family to Georgia and settled in Wilkes County. In 1804, when he was thirty-two years old, he was converted and united with the Sardis church. I suppose he was baptized by Brother Mercer, who was at that time pastor at Sardis.

Two years later he was made a deacon of the church and soon began to exercise his gifts publicly in prayer and in exhortation. When Brother Mercer resigned the care of this church, the brethren desired to call Brother Reeves as Brother Mercer's successor. They therefore took steps to have him ordained, and he became for a time their pastor. Such are some of the facts that I have learned about the early labors of Jeremiah Reeves.

How long he served the Sardis church I do not know, but I learn that his brother, Rev. Malachi Reeves, succeeded him perhaps in 1817. This would leave only a few years for Brother Jeremiah's term of service.

My acquaintance with him did not begin till some time in the twenties. In a few years after our first

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\*NOTE.—After the publication of this article it was found that the name of Jeremiah Reeves does not appear on the records of Sardis church, as its pastor. But since there was good authority, notably that of Dr. Campbell in his "Georgia Baptists," for counting Mr. Reeves as one of the seven pastors, the author allowed this account to remain unaltered.—EDITOR.

meeting, I came to know him well and to love him. When I was ordained I was glad to have him one of those who laid their hands upon my head. If memory is not at fault, he made the ordaining prayer. It was an epoch in my life no less impressive than my baptism. About two years after my ordination in 1835, Brother Reeves died, in 1837, at the age of sixty-five years.

This good man, like many preachers of that generation, was blessed with very little learning and he was poor in this world's goods. But he was possessed of excellent sense. His manners were discreet, free from rudeness, and very conciliating and kind. And his crowning grace was his deep and earnest piety. It is truly wonderful what a dignity religion can throw around a man.

It is Milton that tells us how Satan, when he stood before the angel, was "abashed and felt how awful goodness is." There is something like this among men. When the wicked are in the presence of one whom they know to be a truly godly man, they are often impressed with feelings of respect that check their levity and hush, for a time, their reckless profanity. And the case of Brother Reeves affords a striking example of the fact.

In his home he rightly gave to family prayer supreme importance. No household is safe without a family altar. A prayerless family may be wealthy and cultured, but the chances of the children for heaven are few indeed. In saying this, I do not forget the sovereignty of divine grace or God's electing love, but as a means of this grace God has commanded you to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And there are not better opportunities of

doing so than those afforded by a well-served family altar. Brother Reeves fully recognized his duty in this matter. He offered up his morning and evening prayer in his family with faithfulness and regularity. In such a household we might expect the best results. I knew but two of his children; they were members of the church. Three others I have heard were also members, of the other four I have no knowledge; but with such training as they had, we well may hope that they all walked in the faith of their sainted father, for it is written, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

I can give no details of Brother Reeves's labors. I only know that they covered an extensive territory, and were prosecuted with untiring zeal. In his ministry he preached the gospel, pleaded the cause of missions and urged the cause of temperance. So he labored till he died.

His death, like his life, was a lesson. He died like a Christian, eager to depart and be with Jesus. No fears or misgivings disturbed his last hours.

God does not measure worth after the manner of men. Such a man as Jeremiah Reeves may rank in heaven far above many who have filled the world with their fame.

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SECTION THREE.

ENOCH CALLAWAY.

This brother was the youngest son of Mr. John Callaway, who came to Georgia from Halifax County, North Carolina, in 1784. He brought with him his wife and several children. They settled in Wilkes



County in the neighborhood of Sardis Meeting-house. His son Enoch was born in 1792 and when only sixteen years of age he was converted and joined the church at Sardis, being baptized by Dr. Jesse Mercer. In 1811 he married a Miss Reeves, a relative of those good men, Malachi and Jeremiah Reeves, of whom some account has already been given.

It came to pass that he inherited the family homestead—the place where he was born and raised—and there he lived till he died, in 1859. And at that homestead he raised his children. I have had the pleasure of seeing that old home and of enjoying its fraternal hospitality. It is not a baronial castle, it is not a palatial residence of a modern city; it is only a comfortable, substantial, country home, but I ween it has sheltered more true domestic happiness during the century of its existence than many a lordly structure. For at least two generations the fire on its family altar has never gone entirely out. Its inmates have breathed the atmosphere of piety and often enjoyed the peace of God, which passeth all understanding through Jesus Christ our Lord.

At the age of thirty-one, in 1823, Brother Enoch Callaway was ordained to the gospel ministry. His field of labor was in Wilkes and adjoining counties. In 1827, I learn, he became the pastor of Sardis—his own native church. No doubt there were old men and women in that church who remembered Enoch Callaway from his childhood. Then there were many members with whom he had associated in a most familiar and intimate way, and yet somehow he had grown up to be the leader and shepherd of these very people. The situation was indeed a delicate one, requiring at once



the wisdom of the serpent and the gentleness of the dove. The case reminds us of the ancient proverb, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." But Brother Callaway seems to have been an exception to the rule, for he continued to shepherd the Sardis flock till he was taken to the "better land," thirty-two years after his appointment.

His labors, however, were not confined to Sardis. According to the necessities of that day, he divided his time with other churches. One of those churches was County-line, so called because it was near or upon the line which separated two adjacent counties. It was about sixteen miles from Penfield. It so happened that while I was connected with Mercer University I had the opportunity of preaching, as a supply, to the County-line people, on a vacant Sunday for about a year. I thus became well acquainted with them. And though I could not meet Brother Callaway personally, as he was filling appointments elsewhere, nevertheless I met his influence. It was easy to discover the deep affection of the members for their beloved pastor. And there can be no doubt that such was his standing with all the churches that he served through the whole of his ministerial life. And we may well conclude that his life was a success.

Brother Callaway was not a scholar. His educational advantages were few. He had his Bible, a copy of Gill's Commentaries and an English dictionary. Besides these he may have had a very few common books. But he made diligent use of his meager library; especially he made the Bible his study. And he brought to the study of it a sanctified heart and a mind remarkably well endowed by nature. With these gifts

he was able to grasp the essential truths of revealed religion, and to expound them correctly to those who heard him. His ability to do this was a basal element in his success as a preacher.

But in attempting to account for his success, we find in him another element of character that must not be overlooked. I allude to his extreme caution in forming his judgments. It is said by one who knew him most intimately that when a question which he had not already decided was presented to him, he was never in haste to answer it. Not until he had carefully considered it in all its bearings would he attempt to answer it. The consequence was that when he did render an answer, he very seldom had to retract it or even to modify it. This habit of mind inspired his people with great confidence in his judgments, while it qualified him to lead his flock to the green pastures and the flowing fountains of divine truth. No wonder he could hold his people through his long pastorate.

Again, it is worthy of notice that without training of the schools he delivered his sermons extemporaneously, in language that was perspicuous and forcible and seldom defaced with a grammatical error.

To these qualities of mind we must add his earnest faith before we complete his character. Brother Callaway believed the Bible. He never inquired what the Bible ought to teach, but he was content to learn what it does teach. The first question no human intellect is able to answer, but the second question lies within the reach of every sincere and honest inquirer. It was in this spirit we may safely infer from all the facts above mentioned that Brother Enoch Callaway studied the Scriptures most faithfully.

It has been before stated that this good man was ordained in 1823, became pastor of Sardis church in 1827 and died in 1859. These figures give thirty-six years for the whole period of his ministry and thirty-two years for his pastorate of Sardis church. He was, at his death, sixty-seven years old.

I delight to contemplate such a character as his. And I rejoice all the more when I reflect that for a hundred years there have been among our Baptist preachers in Georgia scores and hundreds just like him. Such men are witnesses for Christ. When one goes forth to preach the gospel endowed with the learning of the schools there is danger that the world will ascribe his success to his learning, and there is some danger that he himself may feel flattered by its judgment and become proud of his honors. But when one goes forth with very little learning beyond his spelling-book and his reader, trusting to the living God, and drawing his wisdom from the Holy Scriptures, then his success makes him a witness for Christ whose testimony the logic of a thousand Ingersolls shall never be able to overthrow. True, in the present condition of the world we must have a learned ministry. But no amount of learning can be a substitute for an indwelling Christ.

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SECTION FOUR.

JOSHUA S. CALLAWAY.

I have spoken of the pastors of Sardis church. The seventh pastor, Rev. B. M. Callaway, the youngest son of Rev. Enoch Callaway, is still living, having reached already about the twenty-sixth year of his pastorate.

As I am dealing chiefly with those who have passed away, I must leave him, hoping that when, by the grace of God, he shall have finished his course with joy, some future writer, who shall love him as well as I do, may furnish the Baptists of the twentieth century a reminiscence worthy of his name and work.

Besides its pastors, Sardis church has given to Georgia quite a number of prominent and useful men. One of the most distinguished of these was Rev. Joshua S. Callaway.

This brother was born in Wilkes County, Georgia, in 1789. He was a cousin of Rev. Enoch Callaway. His parents were members of Sardis church. In 1800, when Joshua was only eleven years old he obtained a hope in Jesus. His experience, for one so young, was remarkable. We have an account of it on record given by himself in his own words. I wish I had space to report it in full. It would be very interesting and instructive, for it shows how clearly a little boy can be made by the grace of God to understand and to apply to his own comfort the plan of salvation through faith in the crucified Savior.

He did not, however, immediately join the church. This was not his fault. His older friends, yielding to a general distrust about the conversion of young children, dissuaded him from doing so. It was not till he had reached his twentieth year that he was baptized by Doctor Mercer. What may have been the incidents of his religious experience through those nine years of waiting, I am not able to tell. But another period of about ten years passed away, during which he remained in Wilkes County.

Not long after his baptism he married the daughter

of Mr. Pitt Milner, who was also a member of Sardis church. Though his opportunities for obtaining an education had been very poor, his thirst for knowledge made him a diligent student. Such was his success that in due time he became "a profound theologian—deeply versed in the doctrines and discipline of the gospel"; and after he entered the ministry, he was regarded by those who knew him as "an exceedingly interesting and powerful preacher."

In 1818 he removed to Jones County, where he joined a church bearing the same name as the one he had left in Wilkes. It was this church that called him to ordination. He was accordingly ordained in June, 1820, by Edmund Talbot, Benjamin Milner, and John M. Gray.

Very soon after his ordination he found himself in charge of four churches. To serve them faithfully required very nearly his whole time. He could give but little attention to his business at home. He was walking in the footsteps of many a Baptist preacher of the years that had passed. But in this trying emergency his noble wife said to him: "You go and preach, and I will stay at home and work." She was a bright example of the mothers and wives who have adorned our churches in Georgia. But her zeal might have been more than her strength, had it not been supplemented by the generous fidelity of a faithful deacon, whose name was Thomas Blount. In speaking afterwards to a friend of these early trials, Brother Callaway said: "But for the instrumentality of this kind brother, I should have been obliged to give up my churches, and work at home to support my family." Behold the value of a faithful deacon! Let not this lesson be lost.

Brother Callaway labored ten years in Jones County, and with great acceptance. He then moved to Henry County. And after a while he settled in or near Jonesboro and became pastor of the Baptist church in that place, which pastorate he held until his death.

It was in this field that he did the best work of his life. He soon won the confidence of all who knew him, and wielded great influence throughout the bounds of the Flint River Association. His coming into it was timely. It was just when Georgia Baptists were in trouble on the subject of missions and other benevolent works. The controversy was rife in the Flint River Association. At first some thought it doubtful on which side the new-comer would stand, but he did not leave them long in doubt. He soon identified himself with the friends of all benevolent enterprises. Indeed, such was his influence that he became their leader.

The opposition was led by Rev. William Moseley, one of the ablest men among the anti-missionaries. At least one association, the Ocmulgee, and perhaps others, had already declared, by resolution, "non-fellowship with all so-called benevolent enterprises of the day." The question was obliged to come, sooner or later, before the Flint River Association.

Elder Moseley and Elder Callaway were both strong men. They were for a time good friends. They preached together, and sometimes when they were at a meeting they would, while the congregation was collecting, withdraw to some retired spot and there kneel and pray for one another. But when the question of missions was brought before the Association, these two men were on opposite sides. The subject was

brought before the body in the form of a resolution similar in meaning to those passed by other associations, declaring "non-fellowship with the so-called benevolent institutions of the day." These institutions included missions, Sunday-schools and temperance societies. A motion was made to adopt the resolution. This led to an earnest debate on both sides. At length Elder Callaway, who was the moderator, calling another brother to take his seat, came to the floor and addressed the Association against the resolution. The effect of his speech was to secure a large majority on his side. He then addressed himself directly to the friends of the resolution and entreated them in tender and loving words not to withdraw from the Association. But this last appeal was of no avail. When the vote was taken and the resolution was lost, its advocates, with Elder Moseley at their head, withdrew in a body. The churches which they represented were anti-missionary churches. In a little while these churches formed a new association—the Towaliga. But the great bulk of the Flint River Association was saved to the cause of missions and in due time joined the Georgia Baptist Convention. Elder Callaway held the moderator's chair of the Flint River Association fifteen years, even up to the time of his death.

How many people he baptized is not known. But it is known that for some years he kept a memorandum of all his baptisms till they amounted to one thousand and four hundred, and then for some reason discontinued the record.

His death-bed was a great triumph, as was his long and useful life. He was stricken in the pulpit. By some accident his coat on that morning was found to



be quite wet about the collar and shoulders. Efforts were made to dry it and he concluded that it was sufficiently so to protect him from cold. But it proved to be otherwise. While preaching he was suddenly stricken with a chill. He called one of his brethren to his side that he might be ready to help him if he should fall and then proceeded to finish his sermon—the last one he ever preached. He was carried home and put to bed. Severe illness followed and it was soon apparent that his end was near. He knew his condition and he was ready to meet it. During his sickness, Elder Moseley came to see him. They had not met since that terrible day in the Association when they seemed to be rent asunder by the spirit of the controversy. As he came in he was welcomed and invited to a seat close by the sufferer. They talked together for awhile. Presently Elder Moseley said in substance: "Brother Callaway I heard you were sick; I felt a desire to come and see you. I thought of the times when we preached together and prayed for one another in the woods, and I could not be satisfied without seeing you. And now, Brother Callaway, I want to kneel here by your bed and pray with you once more." Of course all present were glad to have him do so. He prayed most feelingly. When he arose from his knees, he said again: "Now, Brother Callaway, I want to wash your feet." Well, there was no evading his appeal; preparations were made and there you might have seen this uncompromising anti-missionary on his knees washing the feet of his missionary brother. Say that he was a "hard-shell" if you please, but the above incident proves that Elder Moseley loved Jesus and his brother.



Brother Callaway's last work was to dictate a loving farewell letter to the church of which he was pastor. I have had the pleasure of seeing that letter. It breathes the most intense desire for the spiritual growth and comfort of his beloved people.

Thus ended the life of Rev. Joshua S. Callaway. Its simple story illustrates a great and noble character worthy of our respect and of our emulation. He was three times married and left a large family of children and grandchildren. May his numerous descendants follow the example of their noble ancestor.

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SECTION FIVE.

PITT MILNER AND JOHN MILNER.

These two brothers were both members of Sardis church and their early religious lives were nurtured under its influence, and therefore their years of subsequent usefulness should be placed to the credit of that church.

I had no personal acquaintance with either of these brethren, but their names have been familiar to me for many years, and I have known some of their descendants. I will speak first of the elder of these two brothers—

*Pitt Milner.*

He was known among the churches of his day as an exhorter. He was never ordained to the ministry. I do not know that he ever was made a deacon. He seems to have been only a lay member of the church. But he was endowed in a marked degree with the gift of exhortation. His earnest piety, his love of souls, his strong, good sense, his knowledge of the Scriptures

and his fluent speech, richly qualified him for this special function.

In the time of Pitt Milner and for years afterwards, exhortation was an element of power among our Georgia churches. Nor need we be surprised that it should be so, for exhortation is emphasized by Paul as one of the spiritual gifts which was expected to be found in the apostolic churches, and in his instructions he did not fail to enjoy its use.

As an exhorter Brother Milner was in great demand. Brother Mercer, while pastor of the Sardis church, would often call upon him to follow his own sermons with words of exhortation. He was not afraid that his gifted lay brother would impair the effect of the sermon, but hoped rather that he would seize the salient points and give to them perhaps even greater weight with his earnest and fervent thoughts. And there is no doubt that he often intensified the force of the mighty truths which had fallen from the preacher's lips. His fame extended far and wide in Wilkes and the adjacent counties and nowhere was he a mere cipher in a religious gathering when a door was opened for him to speak. Moreover, his labors were a free-will offering. It may be assumed as certain that he never received a cent for any of his exhortations. He laid them of his own free will upon the golden altar, whence they went up as incense to the great white throne in the most holy place in heaven.

But where are our exhorters now? Has the gift of exhortation been withheld from our churches? I hope not, and yet in many of our most conspicuous churches this precious gift seems to be in a state of sad paralysis, especially among the lay members of the church. This

is greatly to be deplored. Will not our male readers consider and study the example of Pitt Milner? He stands as a beacon-light before you. All you need to reproduce the good which he was able to do is to emulate his fervent piety and his deep compassion for the lost. Brethren, in your prayer-meetings, whether in the meeting-house or in the parlors of your neighbors, you may find frequent opportunity to speak a word for Jesus.

I know not the incidents of Brother Milner's life. So I must be content to give this imperfect sketch of him.

He left seven children, and many of his descendants are now living—some in Georgia and some in Alabama, and possibly other States still farther west. A granddaughter, Mrs. Apsyllah A. Harman, widow of Col. Z. E. Harman, is living in Atlanta, and Rev. Pitt Milner Callaway, a grandson, in Alabama. Another granddaughter is Mrs. Birnita M. Head. These are children of Rev. Joshua S. Callaway, and their mother was a daughter of Pitt Milner.

#### *John Milner.*

When this brother joined the church he soon became its clerk. Then he was appointed one of its deacons. He too was an exhorter for a time, but ultimately he was ordained to the ministry and devoted to it in faithfulness and with zeal the balance of his life. His labors extended over a wide field and his preaching was well received among those who heard him. I learn that he once owned the tract of land on which the town of Barnesville, in Pike County, now stands. His oldest son lived upon that land and, as was natural, his

father was sometimes his guest. He thus became acquainted with the people of the neighborhood. He found among them a few Baptists as sheep without a shepherd. Ever mindful of the Master's work, he began to labor among them and soon organized a little church of twelve members and it was called Sardis church. In 1827 he himself made his home near this church, where he lived and labored till his death in 1841. By that time the little church of twelve members had on its roll nearly a hundred names. It came to pass that the town of Barnesville grew up around it and it became one of the strongest churches in the association to which it belonged.

Brother John Milner was blessed with one gift which is worthy of notice. He was one of the "sweet singers in Israel." When I was a boy I heard the old folks around me speaking with admiration of his singing. If his brother, Pitt, was distinguished for his effective exhortations, he himself seems to have been no less distinguished for his effective singing. An illustration of his power may be found in the following anecdote. I heard it perhaps fifty years ago, from a pious lady who I think knew him personally and who had felt his power in sacred song. The story is to this effect:

On one occasion when some distance from home in a section of country where he was a stranger, it happened that he spent a night at a village inn, or tavern, as it was then called. The weather was cold and the only fire he had access to was in the office of the inn. Those who know anything about the village tavern in the early decades of this century will remember that the office thereof was often made the gathering-place

of the idlers about the town. There they could drink their toddy at the bar that usually occupied one corner of the room and revel, if they pleased, till midnight. It was in such a room as this that the tired preacher sat down after supper to wait for bedtime. Presently, however, the room began to be filled with the aforesaid idlers. They took no notice of the quiet stranger that sat on one side by the fire. Those who felt inclined no doubt imbibed their toddy at the bar, but soon they were seated in a semi-circle around the wide hearthstone. They were evidently intent upon having a so-called "good time." Hilarity, provoked by rude jests and coarse wit, seemed to rule the hour. After a while, one of the party was called upon for a song. And after him another and another, till several had sung. We may well imagine what would likely be the character of the songs in such a crowd. At length one of the revelers turned to Mr. Milner, who had not smiled during the evening, and said, "Stranger, can you not give us a song?"

"With all my heart," said he, and rising from his seat, he stood for a moment erect, till every eye was fixed upon him. Then with his melodious voice he sang that old hymn which may still be found in "Mercer's Cluster," beginning thus:

"Stop, poor sinner, stop and think  
Before you farther go;  
Can you sport upon the brink  
Of everlasting woe?"

I wish I could quote all the hymn, but it contains five double stanzas besides the chorus. Milner, however, sang the whole of it to that reckless company

before him. When he closed and resumed his seat the room was as silent as the grave. In a few minutes one of the company picked up his hat and walked out; another quickly followed and then others, till in a very short time the stranger was again alone in the room. What good that song may have done we know not now, but we may find its results in heaven.

This good man died in 1841, leaving, I think, several children and many grandchildren to revere his memory.

And now I must take leave of Sardis church. I have lingered with pleasure upon the memory of her sainted dead. And as the evening cloud reflects the beams of the setting sun back upon the western landscape, so may these reminiscences reflect the departing glory of their instructive lives back upon the present generation.

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SECTION SIX.

JAMES REEVES.

Of this good brother I have no personal recollections whatever. I do not remember even seeing him. What I know of him, therefore, is derived from other sources than my own acquaintance with him. My information, however, is authentic and reliable. I hope, therefore, I need no apology for giving him a place in these reminiscences.

Rev. James Reeves was the brother of Rev. Jeremiah Reeves and Rev. Malachi Reeves. There was also another brother—a preacher whose name was John—but of him I have very little information. Of Jeremiah and Malachi I have already written.

Rev. James Reeves was born in 1784, in Guilford, North Carolina. He came to Georgia with his father's family. He was ordained to the ministry in 1814 when he was thirty years old. From that time he devoted himself with great zeal and self-denial to the work to which the Lord had called him.

Like most of his associates in the ministry of that day he had enjoyed but few opportunities to attend school. But he was a diligent reader of the Bible and became so familiar with it that he was called by his friends a "walking concordance." His piety was deep and earnest. His love of souls seemed to be the ruling passion of his heart. This was manifest not only in the pulpit, but in the walks of social and of business life. He was on the watch for an opportunity to speak a word for Jesus to his unbelieving neighbors. And it is said that his loving efforts were often crowned with success. His life was a bright and shining light in whatever circle he moved.

As a preacher he seemed to prefer to labor among the people of the frontiers of the white population. He settled in Jasper County soon after it was redeemed from the Indians. He at once went about with his message of love and salvation among the scattered settlers of the new county. He may have found here and there a Baptist family from some of the older counties, but there was hardly an organized church or even a Baptist meeting-house in all that region. This condition of things, however, did not discourage Brother Reeves. While he remained in Jasper he preached far and wide through that county. But it seems he gloried in being a pioneer preacher. Hence when the county of Butts was opened to white settlers and emigrants



began to come into it, he gave up his home in Jasper and moved to the new county. And when the tide of civilization still flowed westward towards the Chattahoochee he followed it, till finally he made his home in Troup County, eight miles from LaGrange. His labors covered in all nine counties of Georgia and extended somewhat into the eastern counties of Alabama.

It is said that of the many churches that he served he was not only their pastor but their founder. He was present at the organization of the Western Association, and was chosen to be its first moderator. This small fact evinces the high estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries.

But preaching and baptizing and organizing new churches and building meeting-houses, all-important as these works were, did not make the sum total of Elder Reeves's usefulness. He was with our missionary fathers in their struggles with the anti-missionaries that at one time were in our Georgia churches. Elder Reeves stood fast to his missionary brethren. Nor was this all. He was an earnest advocate of the temperance cause and of Sunday-schools. There is no computing the good that he and a few kindred spirits may have done in saving so large a portion of Western Georgia from the blighting effects of that sad error which dominated our anti-missionary brethren.

He was twice married. He had ten children of his own and five stepchildren. It is said he presided over the two sets of children with uniform kindness and impartiality; that his family altar was never neglected; and that he would, when quite sick, rise from his bed to conduct family worship. He was also careful of the



spiritual welfare of his servants. He often called them together and read to them the Scriptures and explained their meaning in words that his humble listeners could understand.

His ministry extended through a period of forty years and covered a very large and important territory. Through those years and throughout that territory he was a practical missionary. To fill such a field for so long a time called into exercise those elements of the soul that constitute the true hero. And we believe when the judgment comes, scores of those Georgia preachers, of whom Elder Reeves was but an example and a type, shall wear a brighter crown than ever graced a monarch's brow.

I have said that Brother Reeves raised a large family of children. Of these I learn nearly all became members of Baptist churches. Only two of his sons survived him. One is Rev. J. F. Reeves, now of Valdosta, Georgia. He has had an interesting experience in the ministry, but as he still lives I leave it to some future scribe to write the story of his life. Another son, a brother of J. F., is living somewhere in Arkansas. Two grandsons are also in the ministry, and are laboring in Georgia. Thus the influence of their father has been continued to the third generation and we hope it may yet continue far into the coming future.

Brother Reeves exhibited in his death the same characteristics that distinguished his life—love of souls and faith in God. Not long before he died he asked a brother minister who was sitting at his bedside and whom he loved to help him to his arm-chair that he might pray with his family one more time before he died. Then, to the brother who sat by he said in sub-

stance: "If I should break down before I finish my prayer let there be no excitement, but you take up the prayer where I leave off and finish it for me." Well, he was placed in his arm-chair and successfully offered in his last audible prayer. In contemplating such a death as this, even the unbeliever might well exclaim, as Balaam did when he beheld the glory of Israel, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Reader, would you not like to die the death of the righteous? Then be not like Balaam, who loved the "wages of unrighteousness." Ah! there was the trouble with Balaam. He knew the blessedness that belongs to the death of the righteous, but he knew not the blessedness of his life. He loved the world, he would not live the life of the righteous and he died in battle fighting against the people of God. Walk not, my brother, in the footsteps of Balaam, but live the life of the righteous and then your death shall be like his.

May the God of our fathers continue to guide and to bless our Georgia Baptists!

## CHAPTER IX.

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### SECTION ONE.

N. M. CRAWFORD.

IN the month of January, 1826, when I was sixteen years and six months old, I first met Nathaniel Macon Crawford, then a boy perhaps eighteen months younger than myself. The place of meeting was Franklin College (now the State University).

He entered college with a prestige that no other student at that time could claim. He was the son of Hon. William H. Crawford, who was Georgia's great statesman—the idol of the party which then dominated the politics of Georgia. And it so happened that in 1826 a very large majority of the young men in college, though for the most part too young to vote, were in sympathy with that party. Hence when young Crawford came among them as a fellow student, they received him gladly, even proudly.

Such a reception with such a prestige as his would have turned the head and made a fool of many a youth. But it had no effect on N. M. Crawford. He did not seem to know that there was such a thing as prestige. I remember his very first recitation. It was in geometry. When it came his turn to go to the blackboard, he rose modestly, but with perfect self-possession, and walked across the room to where the board stood, picked up the chalk and drew the diagram. Then,

returning to his seat, he faced the blackboard and proceeded with the demonstration. He went through with unerring accuracy. As he reached the Q. E. D., the professor passed on to the next in order, evidently charmed with the new-comer. All his recitations were of like character. It was soon apparent that he ranked among the best members of the class.

His college life was a model of propriety. His father had charged him when he was about to leave his home to this effect: "My son, when you enter college I want you to remember that you will become subject to its laws. I want you to be a law-abiding student. You know that I have allowed you and your brothers and sisters here at home to play certain games of cards; but at college you will find that such games are strictly prohibited and I want you to make up your mind to abstain from card-playing while you are in college." This timely admonition was faithfully observed by his son. Not only so, he generalized the principle. He was able to see that the principle applied with equal force to all the rules of the institution. Hence it came to pass that through his whole course, he never had a demerit mark scored against him.

When the class had passed its final examination in 1829, we were called before the faculty to hear of the awards which they had made of the commencement honors. Our venerable president, Doctor Waddell, after a few appropriate remarks, proceeded to read the decisions which the faculty had reached. The class numbered twenty-one young men. We were all waiting with intense interest. When the first announcement was made saying, "We have awarded the first honor to Nathaniel Macon Crawford," the class spon-

taneously gave a hearty and cordial applause. There was one valedictorian who stood among his classmates untouched by a breath of envy.

Young Crawford's first step in life was to prepare himself for the legal profession. This he did, and was admitted to the bar. But I am not sure that he ever entered upon the practice of that profession.

Nearly nine years after we had graduated, I became the pastor of the Baptist church in Milledgeville. And there I found N. M. Crawford acting as one of the clerks in the executive department, under the administration of Governor Gilmer. Our acquaintance was soon renewed and we enjoyed for two years many pleasant interviews. In the meantime Oglethorpe University was established in the village of Midway, only two miles south of Milledgeville, and Mr. Crawford was elected professor of mathematics in that institution.

His mother was a Presbyterian and he had been raised in that faith, but as yet he had manifested no concern about his own salvation. In his early years he would often use profane language and he seemed to be wholly indifferent to the subject of religion. But these facts serve to give an additional interest to the story of his conversion.

There was a protracted meeting going on in Milledgeville. One evening after the usual service an invitation was given to those who felt willing to seek the Lord to come forward to the front seat. While the people were singing I was standing near the pulpit looking over the large audience. I saw Professor Crawford, my friend and classmate, sitting far down

the aisle. My heart prompted me to go to him. When I came near, I took his hand and said: "Macon, will you not go with me to the altar and let us pray for you?" Rising promptly from his seat he went with me to the front and there we kneeled together in prayer. When the exercises were over, I learned from him to my surprise and yet to my great joy that very recently he had obtained a hope in Jesus. He told me briefly some of his experiences. He told me enough to give me confidence that he had become a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Not long afterwards he and I were again together. During our walk, I said to him: "Macon, take the New Testament and read it through and when you come to the verse that clearly teaches infant baptism, turn down the leaf and when you see me again show me the verse, and I will give you five hundred dollars." He smiled at my words but made no reply. I did not press him further, for I took it for granted that he had made up his mind to join the Presbyterian church, and this purpose he soon accomplished.

While living in Midway, he found a Baptist lady who won his love and it was my privilege to unite them in marriage. A few years later he resigned his seat in Oglethorpe University, and for a short time took his family to the old homestead at Woodlawn, where his mother was then residing. It was at Woodlawn that he became a Baptist. He and his wife had lived together in perfect harmony in Christian fellowship, though of different churches. But now he found himself a father and he knew that the rules of his church required him to have his children baptized. But he knew also that his wife was opposed to it.

Here was a dilemma. To settle it he sought for guidance in the New Testament. His conscientious mind could not be satisfied with anything less than divine authority for his decision. It may be he remembered the challenge which I had given in Milledgeville. Like many others who had ventured upon the same line of investigation, he failed to find the authority which he sought. At once he went to his wife and to her surprise informed her that he had concluded to join the Baptist church.

Accordingly he was soon baptized by Rev. B. M. Sanders into the Antioch Church, of Oglethorpe County. And not long afterwards he was ordained to the Baptist ministry.

Then began his career as a Georgia Baptist. His public life among us was truly brilliant, but it was so recent and is so well remembered by thousands of living Baptists, that I need not give its history in all its details. It must suffice to say that after holding a few important pastorates first in Georgia and then one in Charleston, South Carolina, he was elected to the chair of theology in Mercer University, and entered upon his duties in that institution in January, 1847. It was here he did his most valuable work. It was here he developed his full character as a scholar of profound and extensive learning, as a Christian of deep and fervent piety, and as a man of spotless integrity, adorned with the most charming social virtues and with a charity that was as wide as the world.

It was at Mercer University that he first met the question concerning Christian paradoxes. He never lost sight of the subject till at length he added that most valuable book, "Christian Paradoxes," to the re-



ligious literature of the present century. It deserves to be in every religious library.

Doctor Crawford lived only threescore years. When he reached his sixtieth birthday he said to some of his friends that he would not, if he could, add ten years to his life, preferring rather to leave himself wholly in the hands of God. He could speak of his own death with perfect cheerfulness, for the everlasting arms were around him. His death was sad only to his weeping friends; to himself it was rather like a bridal day.

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SECTION TWO.

THOMAS STOCKS.

Few persons now living can form a just conception of the condition of things that existed from 1782 to 1786 or 1787, in the counties of Georgia that lay between the Savannah and Oconee rivers. The Oconee was the boundary line between the white settlements and the Indian territory that stretched along the west bank of that river.

When after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, at Yorktown, peace was made with England, the Indians still continued their hostilities along the frontiers of Georgia that were contiguous to them. So it became necessary to protect the frontier with a line of forts. One at least of these forts was located in Greene County, about twelve miles east of Greensboro, and not far from where Bethesda Church now stands. I once had the pleasure of looking upon the site of that old fort.

Now, it came to pass in 1786 that the Indians were



evidently preparing to make another raid upon Greene County. The women and children, at least as many as could be gathered, were shut up in the fort that was nearest to them, while the men took the field to drive back the Indians. While these defensive measures were going on in the field it happened that in one of the forts in Greene County a baby was born on the first day of February, 1786. That baby was Thomas Stocks.

At ten years of age he was an orphan by the death of both his parents. From that time he was reared under the care of an uncle. His opportunities for education and culture were very poor, but somehow he grew up to manhood in favor with his fellow citizens. His strong common sense combined with his integrity, his truthfulness, and his generous good nature made him exceedingly popular.

In 1813, when he was only twenty-seven years old, he was elected to the Legislature from his native county. He sat in the House of Representatives eight consecutive years and was then promoted to the Senate. His position in the Senate he held for twelve years, eight of which he was its president. In the meantime, he served his own county as one of the judges of its inferior court continuously for thirty years. Few public men can be found who have enjoyed for so long a period the unwavering confidence of their constituents as did Hon. Thomas Stocks. Indeed, it is probable that he left public life only when advancing years made it advisable.

But there was opened for him another sphere of service in which his life was no less useful. In 1828 he was baptized by Rev. John Lumpkin, a brother of

Governor Wilson Lumpkin and Hon. Joseph H. Lumpkin, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia. For fifteen years Mr. Stocks had been constantly engaged in politics, but he had in no case stained his garments with a political act for which he had reason to be ashamed. Hence, it seemed to be an easy thing, through the grace of God, for him to bring into his religious life the noble virtues that had distinguished him as a citizen. And this he did with earnest fidelity to all his religious duties. Consequently he soon won the love and confidence of his brethren. It is true his work did not seem to include preaching, or even exhortation in devotional meetings, but his good judgment, his thorough acquaintance with business, his willing mind and great faithfulness made him an important factor in all the affairs of his own church and also of the denomination to which he belonged. He understood the various enterprises of our people, and gave to them a most loyal and liberal support. In addition to these noble qualities, it deserves to be mentioned that his twenty years experience in the Legislature, where for eight years he was the president of the Senate, had made him thoroughly acquainted with parliamentary law.

In consequence of these endowments his services were in constant demand.

In 1829, only one year after his baptism, we find his name first on the committee appointed by the Convention at Milledgeville to raise the twenty-five hundred dollars that were necessary to secure the Penfield legacy. The story of this legacy was told in one of the earlier reminiscences, so it is not necessary to repeat it here. From that time onward for more than

forty years, Brother Stocks was a member of the Executive Committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention. He was a member also of the first Board of Trustees of Mercer University and for many years was its president and was also chairman of the Prudential Committee, and in 1846 he was made president of the Convention, which place he held till his advanced age made it advisable to relieve him. He was always equal to the positions in which his brethren placed him, whether on a finance committee or in the president's chair. He never shrank from any business service required of him and always did it well.

Just here arises a question: Why is it that so many of our intelligent and able men take so little interest in the work of the church and of the denomination to which they belong? One answer to this question is based upon the claims of business. This excuse may avail for employees and for wage-laborers, and yet our chronicles reveal many cases of self-denial among these people. Many a poor seamstress makes out to attend the prayer-meeting and the service on Sunday, and then to put by a little money every week for the missionary-box. But at any rate, the plea of business can not avail for the class of delinquents referred to above. Against such a plea the life of Brother Stocks was a triumphant protest. He too was a man of business. He was the proprietor of quite a large estate. He was for some years president or cashier of a bank in Greensboro and for many years, as before stated, was one of the judges of the inferior court in Greene County. There was certainly an amount of business which would seem sufficient to engage one man's whole time. And yet in spite of his business, he faithfully met every

draft that his brethren made upon his time for the up-building of our beloved Zion.

While serving the Convention, in his own church he was equally efficient. It was his rule to attend its services and his brethren confided in him as in a father.

Brother Stocks was as liberal with his purse as he was with his time. It is said that he gave to Mercer Institute and Mercer University an aggregate of ten thousand dollars. During the same period he was of course contributing to missions and to other benevolent enterprises.

My opportunity to know Brother Stocks was good. I was nine years with him on the Board of Trustees. For twelve years that I resided in Penfield he was a near neighbor and I often met him. I always enjoyed his company and I was glad to see him before me when I was in the pulpit, and this was often my privilege.

He loved his brethren and they loved him. His brethren included the long list of Baptist fathers whom I have been trying to celebrate in these reminiscences. He was often called and perhaps most frequently addressed as "Judge Stocks," and he well deserved that honorable title, but I have preferred to remember him as "Brother Stocks."

He was twice married. I had only a slight acquaintance with his first wife. I knew his second much better. She was the daughter of Brother and Sister Davis. They were a venerable couple of devout Christians who had been for years members of the same church with Brother Stocks and had been coworkers with him in promoting its interests. So it was a grace-

ful thing for Miss Fannie Davis to become the second wife of their well-known and highly valued friend. And faithfully did she fulfill to him the duties of a wife, till at the advanced age of ninety-one years he was taken from her. (1897)

She still lives (1897) in Greensboro with her relatives—the descendants of her father and mother—and is an earnest and liberal Christian. Brother Stocks left no children. His only surviving representative, so far as I know, is this noble lady who was his loving, faithful wife. Her nephew, Brother C. A. Davis, is well known in Baptist circles and is illustrating by his beautiful life the virtues of his ancestors.

I can not close this brief allusion to the Davis family without mentioning that a sister of Mrs. Stocks married Rev. Mr. Bowen and went with him as a missionary to Africa. There they lived and labored until failing health compelled Mr. Bowen to abandon his field. They returned home, but he did not live very long. He died a martyr to his love of souls. His widow is still, I think, one of the family group in Greensboro. The Lord bless the household.

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SECTION THREE.

ALFRED SHORTER AND HIS WIFE.

Among the Baptists of Georgia there have been very many worthy church members who held no official position, but who for their work's sake deserve to be held in grateful remembrance by their brethren of the present and of succeeding generations. Such persons are as truly object-lessons as are the more conspicuous

ones who have filled the higher places in our denomination. And such a man and woman most certainly were Colonel Alfred Shorter and his wife.

My acquaintance with them began in 1836. At that time they were living in Monticello, Jasper County. A company of Baptist preachers from the ministers' meeting at Forsyth were returning home and it was arranged to stop for the night in Monticello. It so happened that Doctor Sherwood and several other ministers, myself included, were the guests of Brother and Sister Shorter. This was the first time I ever met them.

A few years later, when the Cherokee Indians had been removed to their new home in the Indian Territory, and Northwest Georgia was fairly opened to the citizens of the State, Colonel and Mrs. Shorter were among its earliest settlers. Their first stopping-place was in Cedar Valley, but it was not long before Colonel Shorter's keen perception discovered the better advantages of another location. He sold his place in Cedar Valley and made large investments in land about the junction of the Etowah and Oostanaula rivers, and along the banks of the Coosa. This land became very valuable. A part of it was included within the area upon which the city of Rome now stands. The sale of these city lots no doubt helped to make him rich, but his fertile and well-cultivated fields must have contributed largely to the same result. He was soon managing a very large and complicated business that yielded to him an ample revenue. He was perhaps the richest man in Floyd County.

This was the prosperous condition in which I found Colonel and Mrs. Shorter eighteen years after my first

acquaintance with them in Monticello. In 1854 I visited Rome, by special invitation, to spend a Sabbath with the Baptist church. Part of the time I was the guest of these good people at their elegant home near the city. My wife was with me. It is needless to say that we were entertained with generous hospitality. This was only my second interview with them.

Two years later it pleased the church at Rome to call me to be their pastor. I accepted the call and entered upon my duties on the first of January, 1856. This brought me into close relations with Brother and Sister Shorter, which were continued for three years and eight months. I had, therefore, the best opportunity of knowing them both.

I have said that he was a rich man. But of what value are riches in the hands of a man without an upright character? They only serve to make his faults more conspicuous and his vices more hideous. The tinsel of wealth and the glamour of ostentation may draw around him a horde of sycophantic flatterers, or of greedy parasites who hope to fatten on his excesses, but he finds in his retinue few sincere, unselfish friends—the wise and the good forsake such a man.

In contrast with the case just alluded to, it is refreshing to turn to a character like Colonel Shorter's. One element of his character was an unobtrusive modesty. He seemed to have not the slightest desire to be a leader. This might be thought an indication of weakness, for it often happens that one who has no ambition to lead is at the beck and call of others—utterly devoid of all personal independence. But in Brother Shorter's case a suspicion of weakness would be a great mistake; for his modesty was offset by another



trait that marked him as a man of inflexible firmness. While he did not care to lead, it was equally true that he could not be led. I never knew a man who was more completely his own master than Alfred Shorter.

Another element of his character is found in the accuracy of his judgment. And here we touch what was in him a most remarkable endowment. His education was limited—he knew nothing about the logic of the schools. He studiously avoided debate. I think he did not speak five words in any of our church conferences during all the years that I was his pastor, and yet the conclusions which he would reach were more generally correct than those of any other member. His judgments were like intuitions. The proof of all this is found in the confidence that the people who knew him had in his judgment. Without trying to be so, he was almost everybody's adviser. His opinions upon all matters of business were almost oracular among the people.

Now, when to these qualities of modesty, firmness, personal independence and soundness of judgment we add his faith in God, his sincere feeling of moral obligation and his sterling integrity, manifesting itself in his love of truth and of fair and just dealings towards all men, we behold his character clothed with that nobility which commands our admiration. But this is not all.

Colonel Shorter was not content with being merely just. Many a rich man can boast that he never intentionally wronged a neighbor, and yet he may be dominated by a cold, unsympathizing selfishness. Not so with Colonel Shorter. He was generous as well as



just. He was the poor man's friend, and many now living could bear witness to his generous kindness. But his beneficence was not limited to private charities. He gave liberally to every public enterprise that, in his judgment, promised to be for the glory of God and the well-being of man. When his brethren in 1854 wanted to build a church edifice, which was very much needed, they were then few in number and of moderate means. Nevertheless they built an eight-thousand-dollar house, and I have heard that Brother Shorter paid six thousand dollars, equal to three-fourths of the entire cost.

But the crowning work of his benevolence was the founding of the college which bears his name. He expended upon that enterprise, including a permanent endowment of forty thousand, not far from a hundred thousand dollars.

The college was designed for the advanced education of the daughters of Georgia and its adjacent States, not only in secular learning, but also in moral and religious truth. The building contains not only recitation and lecture rooms, where may be heard the deliverances of earthly knowledge, but also a chapel where may be heard the words of inspired wisdom that teach the way which leads to everlasting life. It is a monument to the memory of its founder that a prince might envy.

What more need be said of Mrs. Shorter than that she was the true counterpart of her noble husband. This husband and wife were one. So at least it seemed to those who knew them. They were rich, lived bountifully and dispensed a generous hospitality, but they were not what are called "society people." If the hus-

band was the poor man's friend the wife was an angel of mercy to all who were suffering or in sorrow. She was in full sympathy with all her husband's schemes of public beneficence. In the case of the college, this sympathy with him was gracefully indicated by Brother Shorter himself. He caused to be put up in the chapel a large window, beautifully ornamented and inscribed in brilliant letters with her name, as a personal memorial of his devoted wife who had passed away. Indeed it would seem that so far as his wishes were concerned he would have preferred that the institution had been named for her rather than himself.

Let not the example of these two good people be lost on those who, like them, are blest with this world's wealth.

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SECTION FOUR.

PATRICK H. MELL.

Of this brother I took occasion to speak last year in a review of a memoir of his prepared by his son, P. H. Mell, Jr. In that memoir we find a full account of Doctor Mell's life and work and of the honors conferred upon him by his brethren, not only in Georgia, but throughout our Southern Baptist Zion. This memoir is so complete and its publication so recent that there is scarcely room left for anything more to be said about him. And yet my long acquaintance with him and our lifetime friendship makes me unwilling to pass him by without giving his name a place in these reminiscences.

I first saw Doctor Mell in Walthourville, Liberty County, Georgia, in the summer of 1832. He was a

student in the academy at Walthourville, then presided over by Professor Pincheon, an able and experienced teacher. The time for the annual examination of the school had come. The principal had given notice of it weeks before and a large assembly of gentlemen and ladies were on hand to witness the exercises.

They proved to be exceedingly interesting. The range of studies reached from the primary readers up to the higher Greek and Latin classics, not omitting the branches of English learning usually taught in our best high schools. The pupils included at that time both males and females, representing some of the best families of Liberty and the adjoining counties. A goodly number of them had reached the age of young men and young women. Conspicuous among the young men was Patrick H. Mell.

The principal of the school had selected a few gentlemen from the audience to conduct the examination of the several classes as they were called out. Now it happened that young Mell, in one study, had no classmate. When he was called to the front he stood alone upon the floor, erect as a statue. The subject upon which he was to be examined was "Natural Theology," as presented by Doctor Paley. This was a subject quite beyond the curriculum of an ordinary academy at that era.

The examination was committed to Rev. Joseph Stiles, D.D., of the Presbyterian church, who was one of the gentlemen selected to be examiners. Dr. Stiles being a full graduate of a theological seminary, was, of course, equal to the demand made upon him. But the young student proved himself to be prepared for the

ordeal to which he was subjected. He did not hesitate for a moment to answer the questions that were asked. The questions were so arranged as to draw out very fully the author's argument, and Mell's statement of it was clear and complete, as far as it went. It seemed to be evident that if time had allowed, he could have gone through the entire argument with equal accuracy. For myself, I was charmed with this examination.

I have made this incident so prominent, not only because I think it is interesting, but because it serves to illustrate as well as to account for an important element in the character of Doctor Mell's preaching. He was pre-eminently distinguished for the clear logic that always pervaded his sermons. When he mastered the teleological argument of Doctor Paley he was a very young man—hardly more than eighteen years of age. Nor was he a Christian. The time for his conversion had not come. He could therefore feel no spiritual interest in an argument for the existence of God. He could look at it only as a matter of reason. Hence in mastering that argument he was, without perhaps being aware of it, exercising his own mind in processes of logical reasoning. Take notice, this mode of studying began in his early youth. It continued with him as he progressed in his education, till it became habitual and thus gave shape and character to his discourses through all his subsequent life. This logical element in his preaching was noticed and admitted by all his intelligent hearers.

It was probably seven or eight years before I again met Mr. Mell. In the meantime he had become an advanced scholar, especially in classical learning, and had also become a Christian and a Baptist. Early in

the forties he was elected professor of languages in Mercer University. It was at Penfield that I became associated with him most intimately for nearly ten years. For eight years we were both members of the faculty. It would be easy to fill several pages with incidents illustrating his usefulness and his efficiency as a college officer, but I need not relate them here. I would rather give to my readers my impressions of his religious life.

On one occasion he told me a bit of his Christian experience. It was to this effect: Being deeply impressed with a sense of his condition, he was anxious to find some way out of his trouble. He was searching the Scriptures for light and found these words, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans x. 9, 10.) He said to himself, How can a man believe in his heart? Belief is an act of the intellect, not of the heart; hence he must believe with the head and not with the heart.

Such thoughts as these troubled this young seeker very deeply. He groped in darkness for some days, but grace at length enabled him to discover that his faith in Jesus was indeed associated with the exercise of right affections towards God. Of these affections he became conscious, and they are supposed, by common consent, to have their place in the heart. So then the meaning of Paul's words may be thus expressed: A man's faith is effective for salvation only when it is responded to by the affections of the heart leading him

to love, to reverence, to worship and obey God as his Creator and his great Redeemer. Therefore, the exercise of these affections towards God is believing in him with the heart.

In giving the foregoing account of one point in Doctor Mell's experience I do not profess to report his words. Indeed my account is rather an interpretation of the case than a report of the terms in which it was stated.

It is the moral in the story that gives to it its chief importance. Many thousands of people to-day think they are believing in Christ, but their affections are absorbed in the perishable objects of the present world. Is this believing with the heart? And if not, can it be unto salvation?

James says: "Faith without works is dead"; but who can work when not moved to it by some corresponding affection? Is it not therefore equally true that faith without right affections is dead?

All who were accustomed to hear Brother Mell preach will bear witness that he often emphasized the necessity of believing with the heart.

Though I was several years his senior, yet he has gone before me to the heavenly mansions. Nevertheless I can in fancy look beyond the stream of yonder shining shore and see many loved ones who, I humbly hope, are waiting for my coming; and among them how gladly will I greet all with whom I have lived in Christian fellowship and whose pious labors for the Master I have shared.

## CHAPTER X.

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### SECTION ONE.

THOMAS BACON, SR. AND HENRY HOLCOMB.

I BECAME acquainted with Thomas Bacon's household while I was attending the examination of the Academy at Walthourville, of which I have spoken. During my stay in the village I was a guest of the family.

Mr. Bacon's wife was the daughter of Rev. Henry Holcomb, D.D., who was one of the pioneer Baptist preachers of Georgia. His name appears frequently and prominently in the earliest records of our denomination. We find that he was fourteen years old when independence was declared by the Continental Congress in 1776. Though so young, he did not wait long before he entered the army, where his courage and good sense soon raised him to command. In this, his first public service, he discharged his duty with that fidelity which distinguished his after-life.

In 1785, when about twenty-three years of age, he was ordained to the ministry as a Baptist preacher. In 1786 he married and soon afterwards he had the pleasure of baptizing, at one time, his wife, his mother-in-law, and his wife's brother, along with twenty-three other candidates. And not very long afterwards he baptized his own father. This is a remarkable record for one so young in the ministry.



As to his education he was, emphatically, a self-made man; he became by private study a good scholar and distinguished theologian.

It was he who was chiefly instrumental in organizing the First Baptist church in Savannah, and was for several years its pastor. During that period he was identified with Georgia Baptists in all their enterprises, if not indeed their most efficient leader. It was somewhere in the first decade of this century that his daughter, Miss Sarah Holcomb, became the wife of Mr. Thomas Bacon, of Liberty County, Georgia.

When I met this happy couple in 1832, I found them surrounded with eight children, seven sons and one daughter. They constituted a most interesting family. The father and mother were devotedly pious, and were trying to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Their success in this loving effort was wonderful. To the best of my knowledge and belief every child became in early youth a member of a Baptist church. All have now passed away except two.

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#### SECTION TWO.

##### THE SONS OF THOMAS BACON.

##### *Major Edwin Bacon.*

It was in the spring of 1832 that a wedding party assembled in the quiet village of Sunbury to celebrate the marriage of Mr. Edwin Bacon to Miss Louisa Stevens. The groom was the son of Brother Thomas Bacon, Sr., and the bride was the daughter of Brother Oliver Stevens, Sr. The company was com-

posed of the relatives and friends of the young couple. It was my privilege to be present on this occasion as an attendant of the bridegroom and to witness the beautiful ceremony performed by our pastor, Rev. Josiah S. Law.

Mr. Bacon, with his bride, settled at Walthourville and there he lived for several years. He was, if I remember rightly, by profession a lawyer and was much engaged in secular business. He soon became an important man in his county, and while yet in his early manhood he was elected by his fellow citizens to represent them in the Legislature. Though thus encumbered with secular business, he continued to be a member of the church and to give to it his sympathy and his support. With the details of his middle life I am not familiar, for after 1832 we seldom met. Thirty-one years passed away. In the meantime sons and daughters were born to him. Some had grown up to manhood and womanhood.

In 1864 I was called to be pastor of a rural church at Gum Pond, in Mitchell County. I accepted the call and moved my household to a small farm very near the church-house. There I found Major Bacon and his two brothers, Henry and Robert J., living in the neighborhood. The Major's place touched my own, and our residences were less than a mile apart. My acquaintance with himself and wife and her venerable mother was quickly renewed and I soon learned to know his sons and daughters. Several of them were already members of the church and during my sojourn at Gum Pond it was my privilege to baptize two others, a son and a daughter.

Major Bacon was noted for his manly bearing, his

refined manners, his generous nature, and his liberal hospitality. He was also a loving husband and a most affectionate father, while his noble wife, with her earnest piety, her graceful manners and her loving heart, fulfilled the duties of a devoted mother. From such parental influences we would naturally expect the best results. Hence it is not surprising that their children grew up refined and cultured. And so it turned out their sons were gentlemen and their daughters were ladies and, better still, nearly all of them professed to be Christians.

Of Major Bacon's daughters, Caroline (the eldest of those whom I knew) married the late Rev. E. W. Warren and is now living in Macon. Another, Louisa, married a prominent physician, Dr. W. H. Strother, of Albany. The youngest daughter, Nela, married Dr. Osborne, of Columbus, and lives in that city. There was one daughter whom I did not know. She had married a gentleman of Savannah and there died, hence I did not find her with the family at Gum Pond.

Major Bacon's oldest son, Oliver, has passed away. Doctor Edwin H. Bacon, his second son, was a gallant officer in the army. He did good service, and I am told distinguished himself at the battle of Benton, near the close of the war. He is now living at Eastman, where he is a prominent and efficient member of the Baptist church.

The next son, DeWitt Clinton, was also in the army connected, I learn, with the signal corps. Since the war he has been engaged in an extensive lumber business and I believe divides his time between Atlanta and Savannah.

The fourth son, Albert, followed his brothers to the

tented field and served his country as a soldier. After his return from the war he united with the Baptist church. But I do not know his present residence or his occupation.

The fifth son, Wallace, was too young to be a soldier. He was my pupil at Gum Pond. I found him to be a noble, high-spirited, generous young man. He is now a prominent physician in Albany and, I am told, an active member of the Baptist church.

The father of this interesting family, Major Edwin H. Bacon, survived the war but a few years. I have no information of his last days, but we may hope that when the crisis came, he felt himself sustained by faith in our great Redeemer.

*Augustus O. Bacon.*

This good brother was the second son of Mr. Thomas Bacon, whose wife it will be remembered was a daughter of Henry Holcomb.

Mr. A. O. Bacon was a well-grown youth and a well-advanced student in the academy at Walthourville, in 1832, where he was preparing himself for the State University. In the examination already referred to he bore an honorable part. I remember especially his success in declamation. He had selected for the occasion Daniel Webster's celebrated speech before the court at the trial of the Knapps for murder. That dreadful tragedy had occurred only a few years before, and the trial of the murderers became a matter of interest throughout the Union. Mr. Webster was employed to aid the prosecution. The wonderful speech which he delivered had not grown old in 1832. The tragedy, the trial, and the speech were still fresh in the

minds of all reading people. This was the speech that young Bacon delivered, with grace and effect, to an appreciative audience.

Like many of our leading Georgia Baptists, A. O. Bacon was converted in his early boyhood. I think he was only thirteen when he joined the church and he enjoyed the confidence of his brethren as long as he lived. Oh, how blessed is a life of early and consistent piety!

He entered the Sophomore class in the University at Athens, in January, 1834. He lodged in the college building, but took his meals at my grandmother's house, with whom I was at that time living. Hence I had daily association for several years with this dear young brother. His college life was worthy of his Christian profession. He stood among the first in scholarship and did not hide his religion. He was a regular attendant upon the services of the Baptist church in Athens, and won the esteem of all who knew him. I was a few years his senior and was already beginning to preach, and sometimes Brother Bacon would accompany me, when my appointments were in the country, and his presence was a great gratification to me on such occasions. It is not strange that an intimacy so close and constant should have established between us the strongest friendship.

My personal acquaintance with Brother Bacon during his course in college enables me to indorse all that Doctor Campbell says of him in the biographical sketch which we find in "Georgia Baptists, Historical and Biographical."

He did not remain at college quite long enough to graduate. "Business of a pressing nature" constrained

him to leave about two months before commencement. But the following extract from a letter, written to him by Doctor Church, the president of the University, at the time that he left college, is equal to any diploma. The letter, judging from the extract, seems to represent the feelings of the whole faculty. Doctor Church says: "We all regretted your leaving before commencement, knowing that, for your scholarship, you would have been entitled to one of the first honors, and that the commencement exercises would have been most creditably sustained, so far as you were concerned, had you taken part in them." These words need no comment. They place a chaplet of honor upon the brow of a young Baptist who was hastening to devote himself to the service of the Master in the preaching of the gospel.

In the autumn of 1836, Brother Bacon married Miss Louisa Jones, a pious and lovely young lady of Liberty County. Soon afterwards he was licensed to preach and then spent two sessions at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, at Columbia, South Carolina. There as in Athens he won the respect and love of his instructors.

Returning to his native county, he was ordained to the work of the ministry in January, 1839, and became copastor with Rev. J. S. Law, of North Newport Church.

Such was the bright and pleasant scene of usefulness that began to open before our dear young brother. But alas! it was only a few short months before the curtain dropped. In July of that same year a sudden attack of sickness closed his eyes in death. But he was able to meet the unexpected blow with undimmed

faith. His last words were, "There is none like Jesus."

He left his young wife and an infant son to weep over his untimely death. Nor were these the only mourners. A large circle of fond relatives and the people whom he had begun to serve mingled their tears with those of the weeping wife and the little boy. Four months after his father's death another son was born, but before he was a year old he had lost both mother and elder brother. That little orphan boy, named after his father, Augustus O. Bacon, is now Georgia's representative in the Senate of the United States. May that son ever live to emulate the virtues and to follow the faith of his noble father!

*Milton E. Bacon.*

The third son of Brother Thomas Bacon and his wife was Milton E. Bacon. He, too, professed religion when young. He, too, was educated at Athens and while in college boarded at our house. Hence I came to know him almost as intimately as I had known his older brother. And as long as he lived our relations to each other were most fraternal and kind.

It was as a teacher that he distinguished himself among Georgia Baptists. Soon after he graduated he married a lady of Liberty County, and not long afterwards opened a female school in Clinton, Jones County. Here he achieved good success for a few years, and then moved to LaGrange. I can not give the exact dates of these changes, but he must have gone to LaGrange about 1845. There he founded the Southern Baptist Female College. It soon became a most flourishing and effective institution of learning. There are hundreds of ladies now living in Georgia



and adjacent States who are indebted to that school for their education and their culture. And it continued for a number of years to dispense its benefactions.

Not long after the war, Brother Bacon removed to Mississippi, where he continued his labors as a teacher till his death. With the incidents of his life after he left Georgia I am not acquainted, but no doubt he continued to be an earnest Baptist and a successful teacher. He left one daughter in Georgia, now the wife of President C. C. Cox, of College Park, near Atlanta.

The fourth son in this interesting group was Sumner Winn Bacon. I saw him only once, when he was a boy. He died very young, while a student in college. The next was

*Thomas J. Bacon.*

He was the fifth son of his father. Of his early years I knew nothing. I found him, however, in 1853, living in LaGrange, engaged, I think, in the practice of law, and a prominent and useful member of the Baptist church. He was then a married man with several little children around him. He had married Miss Meriwether, a niece of my sister-in-law, the wife of the late Judge Junius Hillyer.

When the war came, Brother T. J. Bacon raised a company and went into the army as its captain, but he was soon placed on the staff of General Anderson, who commanded the brigade. At the battle of Seven Pines, during a gallant charge made by his brigade, Captain Bacon received a fatal shot that stretched him on the field. He died in two hours. His remains were sent home to be buried in his native State. His widow has since followed him to the better world. Two sons

and one daughter still survive him, all of whom, I hope, are trying in their several positions to be good Christians and good citizens.

*Henry H. Bacon.*

This dear brother was about as lovely a character as I ever knew and very few have filled more completely than he the full measure of their obligations to God and to their fellow men. He was my near neighbor at Gum Pond for three years. He was deacon in the church, superintendent of the Sunday-school, and our leader of music in public worship. And yet, though so prominent, he was a model of gentleness in his domestic and social life. Everybody loved him. His wife was a daughter of Dr. John E. Dawson. Both are sleeping together now in the cemetery close by the church-house they loved so well. Only two of their children survive them.

Of the family of Thomas Bacon, Sr., only one son, Col. R. J. Bacon, is still living. He is the youngest of the seven. Like his elder brothers, he joined the church in his early years. He is now living, with his noble wife, the granddaughter of Dr. John L. Dagg, near the Gum Pond Church, of which they are prominent and efficient members.

The eighth child of the Bacon family was a daughter. I did not know her, but I learn that she married a Mr. Foster and is still living in Alabama. I trust that she is a Christian, and may God grant that she and her surviving brother, with his pious wife, may continue for many years to add to their present record other works of piety for His glory and for the good of all mankind. And I also pray that all the descendants of Henry Holcomb and of Thomas Bacon may follow in the footsteps of their sainted ancestors.

CHAPTER XI.  
OLD-TIME CHURCHES.

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SECTION ONE.

THEIR FAITH AND PRACTICE—THEIR HOUSES OF  
WORSHIP.

IN these reminiscences I have thus far confined myself chiefly to the consideration of individual characters. I have hoped that the piety, zeal and devoted labors of those worthy men and women who did so much for the building up of our denomination might prove to be interesting and instructive object-lessons for the present generation of Georgia Baptists. There are, indeed, many others that well deserve to be remembered and I may yet find an opportunity to write of at least some of them. I shall now devote a few chapters to the consideration of Georgia Baptist churches as they appeared during the early decades of the present century.

They were built upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Hence they contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints and firmly held the New Testament to be their only authoritative creed and their only binding rule of practice. Accordingly, they would not admit any one to baptism and to church membership till he was able to give for himself credible evidence of regeneration in the experience of sincere repentance

towards God and in the exercise of genuine faith in Jesus Christ. The logical result of these views compelled them to repudiate the baptism of infants, and also to adhere to immersion as the New Testament form, and, therefore, the only valid form of administering the ordinance.

The old-time Baptist meeting-house was a simple structure. As has been stated, our Baptist people generally, seventy and eighty years ago, lived in the country, and there they built their meeting-houses. They were built sometimes of logs, but the average meeting-house was a framed building, varying in size to suit the supposed wants of the neighborhood. It was often unceiled on the inside and sometimes its windows were left without glazed sashes. And in many cases no provision was made for warming the house. Now it is simply wonderful how preachers or people could keep up their meetings under such conditions in cold weather. Think of a preacher riding in his buggy ten miles on Sunday morning to meet a candidate for baptism (received the day before at conference), and after baptism having to dress himself in the woods and then leap in his buggy and drive four miles to the meeting-house and conduct the morning service as usual, and then, after the benediction, to step into his buggy again and drive twelve miles, without seeing fire, till he reached his own home, while all day the mercury was near the freezing-point. Of this case I had personal knowledge. Was it a hard case? No doubt the administrator and the spectators felt the cold severely. And the subject, who was a humble colored woman, no doubt felt it more than all. But I

venture to say that neither the pastor nor the subject regarded the physical inconvenience (I need not call it suffering) as worthy to be compared with the transcendent privilege that each enjoyed.

Nevertheless, it is readily admitted that the stove or furnace, with a baptistry flanked by two comfortable dressing-rooms, is a wonderful advance upon the simple arrangements of the old-time meeting-house, while the joy of obedience has suffered, from the change, no diminution whatever.

But the old-time meeting-house still holds its place in many sections of our beloved Georgia. No matter, Jesus is in it. When a company of baptized believers are there, either for business or for worship, the divine Master is with them. So it was in the long ago. Let us then look for a little while at a Baptist church assembled for business, in the twenties.

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SECTION TWO.

THEIR CONFERENCES.

Regarded in its visible aspects, a church conference was about as unattractive a gathering as could be found. Its place of meeting was, in all probability, that old-time meeting-house with its uncouth and rough equipments. Its members were men and women who had left their farms, their shops and their household cares that they might fill their places in the meeting of the Church. They usually met on Saturday which preceded the Sunday that was set apart for the public worship of the Church, and for the preaching of

the gospel to the congregation which might assemble with them on that day.

The conference on Saturday was usually preceded by a sermon, accompanied with prayer and hymns of praise. Then generally after a short recess, the Church met in conference. It was emphatically an independent body. It acknowledged, outside of itself, no power on earth that had a right to control its action. Clothed with such complete self-government, the question may well be asked: What was the business or work that engaged their attention? This question, if answered in all its fulness, would fill several pages; but it may be answered comprehensively in a few words, thus: The business of a church conference is to promote the kingdom of God among men at home and abroad. Did the early churches of Georgia so understand their duty? Only to a very limited degree. They were on the right line of duty, but only at the beginning of it.

That beginning was first to watch over one another in love, to maintain a wholesome discipline among themselves, and to provide a preached gospel as often as they could for themselves and for the community around them. These things they understood. I have stated them almost in the words of their church covenants. And when they were trying to perform these duties, they were really aiming, perhaps, without being aware of it, to promote the kingdom of God in themselves and among their neighbors.

Now, taking these principles with us, let us search the minutes of our old-time churches. I am sure it will appear from those minutes that those old churches did, with great fidelity, watch over the morals and

the religion of their members, and they did it in love. The evidence of this is found in the fact that their minutes are often studded with cases of discipline. This fact I know may show that the offenders were many, but it also proves that the majority of the church, in each case, was faithful and true to put away evil from among them. And yet they did it in love, for how glad were they to receive back to their fellowship a penitent offender as soon as he approached them with a proper confession.

In the light of what has been said I think we may conclude that the chief work of those old conferences was to maintain a high standard of morals and of piety among their members.

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SECTION THREE.

THEIR DISCIPLINE.

It was a rule with many churches fifty and eighty years ago to have the roll called at each conference, and absentees were marked, and at the next conference those who were absent at the previous meeting were expected to explain their absence. This was not an "iron rule." It did not apply to the female members at all, and the male members were not called on for their excuses by name unless they had been absent three times in succession. In that case, when one had failed to attend the meetings, the clerk was required to report him if he did not report himself, and then he was called on to explain his absences. Nor was the Church severe as to the character of the excuse required. He was allowed to plead any reasonable inconvenience.



Though the enforcement of the rule was very lenient, yet its effect was decidedly wholesome. It kept before the minds of all the precept of the Apostle, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together;" and it was easy for them to see that the precept included attendance, not only on the conferences, but upon all the appointments of the church—its prayer-meetings and its Sunday services. The existence of such a rule is a constant appeal to the consciences of church members to fulfill the covenant they have made with their brethren.

I doubt not that there are many Baptist churches in Georgia to-day which have this rule, and I am just so certain that when it is efficiently observed it will lead on to other good works and to greater prosperity.

I have said that the rule should be enforced leniently, but there comes a time when forbearance ceases to be a kindness. When one neglects his church meetings persistently and continuously, he becomes justly a subject of dealing. The pastor and other brethren should labor with him. Peradventure, they may save their brother. But if he should prove incorrigible, then he should be excluded.

Another phase of discipline found in the early churches was manifested in their dealings with the grosser vices. I need not, however, enlarge upon this topic, for I think it is well understood that the churches in those days would not tolerate any gross immoralities. It did not matter who was the offender. So far as their discipline was concerned there was no respect of persons. The offender might be their pastor, or the richest man in the church; but if he was proved

guilty of immorality, his high position could not protect him.

There was still another exercise of discipline among the old-time Baptist churches in Georgia that deserves a passing notice. It was not an uncommon thing for them, in conference, to settle disputes between brethren. In such cases the church did not act precipitately. They would wait till the aggrieved party had sought redress in the way prescribed by our Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. Then if he had failed to obtain what he believed to be his rights, it was his privilege to bring the case before the church. True, such cases were sometimes mere quarrels growing out of bad tempers and unkind words.

I witnessed, nearly sixty years ago, just such a case. It was a quarrel between two prominent sisters. The feeling on both sides became intense, till at length the husband of the aggrieved lady brought the case before the church. He preferred no charges against the offending sister, but only asked for letters of dismissal for himself and wife. For a moment there was silence in the house. Then the offending sister rose to her feet and said substantially: "Brother Moderator, I can't consent for two such people as Brother and Sister —— to leave this church on my account. I believe them to be Christian people." What else she might have said along the line of tenderness and conciliation, I do not know, for just then the pastor interrupted her and said: "Sister, are you willing now to come forward and offer them your hand of Christian fellowship?" Instantly the good lady started down the aisle that she might reach the other parties, who were on the opposite side of the house. They saw her com-

ing, and promptly moved forward to meet her and to grasp cordially her offered hand, and there the three stood weeping together, while many in the audience were also bathed in tears. When they returned to their seats the brother gladly withdrew his request for letters. Thus passed away this threatening cloud, while the beams of the Sun of righteousness adorned its retreating form with the beautiful bow of peace and reconciliation.

Sometimes the disputes among brethren involved the payment of debts and the fulfillment of contracts. How many of the present generation are aware that the conference of a Baptist church would sometimes become, practically, a court of justice? And yet a case of that kind occurred in 1828 in one of the counties of Middle Georgia.

There were, indeed, some churches who would not allow their members to go to law with one another before the State courts. They held this position under Paul's teachings in his first letter to the Corinthians, with which we are all familiar.

There was one other matter that in former years furnished occasion for discipline to our Baptist churches. I allude to the complicated subject of social indulgences and amusements. There is no doubt about it, the New Testament warns the people of God against *the love of the world*. And it is also true that one mode of gratifying this love is found in the pleasures and indulgences of social life.

Our honest forefathers, impressed with these facts, made an earnest effort to protect church members from the contaminations of the world. To this end they placed some worldly amusements under the ban of

stern disapprobation, and made them subjects of discipline. In making these discriminations they made, we must admit, some grave mistakes. But I think it will be found that their mistakes were in allowing some things which they ought to have forbidden rather than in those things which they condemned. For instance, they condemned social dancing and card-playing, because they judged these amusements to be hurtful to spiritual growth and dangerously alluring to other and grosser vices. In this judgment they were certainly right. But they allowed social drinking without a word of censure. In this they were inconsistent. But it should be observed that they were not knowingly inconsistent. I can distinctly remember when a moderate "dram" (so called) was deemed as harmless as the same amount of milk. Not only so, it was considered, in hundreds of cases, to be actually helpful and sustaining to the physical system. Hence the most prudent farmers of the country would often furnish it to their hands, especially when their work happened to be more than usually heavy. Religious people did the same thing. Even preachers, after a long sermon, would often relieve their fatigue with a dram.

In the light of these facts it is not surprising that our fathers, seventy years ago, should overlook the evils of moderate drinking. But remember that they did not tolerate drunkenness. Their church minutes show many cases of discipline, which evince their watchfulness over the morals of their brethren.

There are other social evils that our fathers failed to condemn in any very strong terms. These are theaters, operas and circuses. In their days they were very

rare in Georgia. Their true character and hurtful influence were not understood. I do not know that the old minutes contain any cases at all growing out of these amusements. But the evils of dancing and card-playing were well known. They saw in them "a love of the world" that was intense—so intense as to crush all the elements of true piety in those who habitually indulged in them. Hence it is not strange that our fathers gave them no quarter.

Their opposition, in some cases, was so strong that they transferred to the fiddle the abhorrence which they felt for the dance. I knew a good pastor—a man eminent for his piety and learning—who was very fond of the fiddle. He owned one and often played it. He was serving a church in the country, of which he was not a member, and somehow his brethren heard of his fiddle. They couldn't stand it. At conference one of the brethren told the pastor what they had heard and asked if he really played the fiddle. He frankly confessed that he did, and in a very affectionate way tried to convince them that he did it innocently. But the brethren were not satisfied. After a full debate he at last said to them, "Well, brethren, I see my playing the fiddle hurts your feelings. This I am not willing to do. I will therefore agree that I will not play another tune on the fiddle as long as I am your pastor." This was enough. The brethren accepted his promise as all that they had a right to ask. The moral of this story is plain. When you know that an indulgence which you think innocent hurts the feelings of your brethren, it is generous and lovely to deny yourself rather than wound them.

## SECTION FOUR.

## THEIR RECEPTION OF MEMBERS.

The New Testament idea of a church is that it should be an assembly of converted and baptized members who have Christian fellowship with each other. This beautiful ideal Baptists have always and everywhere desired to realize, and to this end have adopted such methods of receiving new members as they hoped would most successfully secure its realization. The New Testament prescribes no particular method of testing the sincerity of one who professes to have exercised "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." But it would be a grave mistake to suppose that the Apostles and the primitive churches took no pains to guard against the admission of unfit members. True, in that early period, it may not have been needful to adopt such stringent methods to protect the purity of the churches as have become necessary in these modern times. The "offense of the cross" was so intense and wide-spread that very few, save those who were truly "born of God," were willing to endure its shame. Hence, those who became willing to confess Christ in baptism by that very consent gave a signal proof of their sincerity. And with this proof the apostolic churches may have been and, no doubt, in many cases were content.

But times have changed. The "offense of the cross" has well-nigh ceased. It is no longer a disgrace and a shame to become a Christian. Becoming a Christian now no longer exposes one to the loss of his citizenship or his social position, and much less does it expose him to the fagot and the stake. Nay, it has come to pass

that the way into the church is easy, and often inviting, for it sometimes leads to respectability. Indeed, in some sections of the so-called church there lies a way that leads to honor and to great emolument.

Under such conditions as are above set forth a people who insist upon a converted church membership must faithfully watch against intruders. If it be needful to watch over one another in love that we may maintain a "wholesome discipline," much more is it needful that we should begin that watchfulness at the very door of the church.

Accordingly it has been the custom with our Baptist churches in America and throughout the world to require every candidate for church membership to give a relation of his Christian experience in order that the brethren may know whether it affords a credible and reasonable evidence of a genuine conversion. This relation always, save in a few exceptional cases, precedes baptism, for the simple reason that a genuine conversion is as essential to the validity of a baptism as it is for admission into the church.

The rule, as above explained, was rigidly observed by Georgia Baptists from their very beginning in the State. Where a church met in conference, it was usual to spend a little while in devotional exercises, except when a sermon with its usual services of prayer and praise had preceded the church meeting. The next thing in order was to "open the door of the church." This was done by the pastor. With kind and gentle words he invited any one present who might feel a desire to unite himself with the people of God to come forward to the front seat during the singing of a hymn selected by the pastor. Here was an interesting crisis.



The pastor might have in his mind's eye some dear youth who he believed ought to come forward, but whose timidity might restrain him. To suit such a case, he would select a hymn like this :

“In all my Lord's appointed ways,  
My journey I'll pursue ;  
Hinder me not, ye much-loved saints,  
For I must go with you.”

As the voices sing these sweet words of holy purpose and high resolve, that timid believer catches the inspiration and, just as the song ceases, walks to the front and takes the seat assigned him. He comes to ask for a place among the people of God. He tells them how he had felt himself to be a sinner, and how he had vainly tried to attain unto righteousness by reforming his life, till he should build up for himself a character exempt from all sin. And then he tells them of his deep distress when he found his own righteousness only a “filthy rag,” and how he then cried unto the Lord for mercy, till at length he was able to believe in Jesus as his Savior, and being thus justified by faith found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and was able to rejoice in hope of his glory.

The account just given of the experience which a candidate for admission to a Baptist church was expected to give is only an outline, with all details omitted, but I think it covers every essential point.

When the candidate had finished his story, it was then in order for some brother to move that he should be admitted both to baptism and to the church. (Admission to both, though not always expressed, was always implied.) If the motion prevailed, then followed

a song and the giving to the new brother the right hand of Christian fellowship.

Now, I know very well that the facts above set forth are perfectly familiar to many thousands of the present generation, for the mode of receiving members which I have described still lingers in many sections of our State. Forty years ago it was perhaps universal. But before leaving the subject, I wish to notice what seems to me to be some of the advantages of the old-time method of receiving members into the church.

First of all the relation of one's experience before the church is in many cases a cross. It is perhaps the first cross that a young convert finds in his path. To be able to take it up and joyfully to bear it affords him the opportunity to win the first victory in his religious life, and thus to strengthen himself for still greater struggles that are sure to follow. Jesus said: "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Self-denial and cross-bearing often involve each other and both are demanded when we propose to follow Christ.

Another advantage of this mode of receiving members is the fact that it promotes the fellowship of the churches. This is no small matter. It is well known that a common experience is one of the strongest ties that unite the people of God together. It endures through ages. The Christian of to-day, as he reads the experimental Psalms of David finds his own heart echoing the thoughts of those ancient songs. If these things are true, then a knowledge of one another's experience must promote our mutual fellowship.

A third advantage deserves to be noticed. The

young convert, when he tells to the whole Church the story of his conversion, begins to be a witness for Christ—he is another example of the saving power of the gospel. And many a time a thoughtless listener in the house may hear a word from a young convert that may send him home to repent and weep. Indeed, the very scene may produce a good effect. There was once a gay young lady with no thought of piety, as far as I know, who accompanied her pious mother to her church. It was conference day. When the door of the Church was opened only one came forward, and he was a middle-aged negro. The young lady said to herself: “Surely the Church is not going to receive such a creature as that, he can not tell an experience.” Perhaps she scarcely deigned to listen to the poor darkey’s words, preferring probably to indulge in her own thoughts. But presently, very much to her surprise, the members rose to their feet and, with a sweet song of welcome, began to give the humble candidate the right hand of fellowship. He had told an experience that was responded to by every pious heart in that house.

The lady saw that humble slave receiving from those who were high above him in social life a boon which she, at that time, dared not ask. The incident made a lasting impression upon her mind, and it was not very long before she told her experience in that same country church and received from those same brethren and sisters the right hand of fellowship. And her after life well illustrated the genuineness of her conversion.

That lady was my own beloved mother. She told me

the above story when I was well advanced towards young manhood, which shows that the incident had deeply impressed her.

May this method of receiving members be perpetual among our Georgia Baptists.

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SECTION FIVE.

THEIR BAPTISMS.

Baptists hold that the first duty of a new convert is publicly to confess his repentance towards God and his faith in Christ by being baptized according to the Savior's commandment, and then to become a member of the church. When, therefore, he relates to the church his experience and they vote to receive him, that vote does not take effect to make him a member till after he has been baptized. As soon, therefore, as the church votes to receive him, the next thing to do is to arrange for his baptism, in order that he may be qualified to become a member of a church of baptized believers. All these points our Baptist fathers well understood, and practiced accordingly.

It was their custom to meet with the candidates for baptism at a convenient hour, under the blue sky, and beside some suitable body of water. Large congregations were generally on hand to witness the baptisms. There was something that made those baptisms exceedingly attractive. Else why should so many come together to witness them? Mere curiosity might have influenced some of the young and giddy, but it can not explain the continued attendance of the matured and old men and women who were wont to assemble on

such occasions. Curiosity is easily satisfied, and when satisfied ceases to act as a motive. No mere curiosity will not explain the phenomenon. May not the true explanation be found in the fact that a baptism, rightly performed, is a thing of divine origin? God is in it. It is the effective influence of his unseen presence that gives to it its attractiveness and its power.

Take these ideas away from the ordinance and how silly would a baptism appear! Think of that man who, nearly two thousand years ago, came out of the wilderness, with his uncouth apparel and his unkempt locks. Was he not a fit subject of derision and ridicule? But, mark, he is not ridiculed. He utters strange words. He proclaims a startling fact—that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” and, as a preparation for it, exhorts the people to repent and be baptized. We learn from his own lips that it was God who commanded him to baptize. Great multitudes attended his ministry, and many were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. It was his privilege also to baptize our Savior and to proclaim him to the people as the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Such was the origin of baptism. And just such scenes as were enacted on the banks of the Jordan have been repeated through all the centuries down to the present time. The rivers of Georgia for more than a hundred years have often been signalized by Christian baptism, attended with thronging congregations. When Jesus gave the great commission to his disciples, he promised to be with them to the end of time. According to this promise, Christ is with his servant in

baptism, and it is his unseen but effective presence that draws the people to the baptismal waters.

But this is not all. Baptism has a more important significance. Jesus himself used it to represent his awful sufferings in the work of redemption. He said to James and John, "Are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Here he speaks metaphorically. What does he mean? He must have meant that there was some great ordeal before him whose fearful nature he expressed by calling it a baptism. He did the same thing on another occasion. He said to his disciples: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" In both these cases he had reference to that great sorrow which ended in his burial and his resurrection, of which his baptism was a prophetic symbol. It foreshadowed his own death and resurrection.

But the significance of baptism reaches yet farther. After the day of Pentecost, while it still represented, retrospectively, the Savior's burial and his resurrection, and is now the memorial symbol of both, Paul turns it to the believer, and makes it represent to him his burial with Christ unto sin and his resurrection with Christ to a new and a better life, and finally his resurrection with Christ from the grave to the glories of the new heavens and the new earth.

The foregoing thoughts are not original. How could they be, while every baptism of a true believer has been, through the centuries, an object-lesson designed especially to teach them? Yet still they deserve to be often repeated, for they made baptism, when rightly administered, a witness for Christ and our

holy religion, wherever it may be exhibited. I knew a learned infidel once who frankly confessed that there were two facts in support of Christianity which he could not set aside. These were the memorial supper and baptism.

The administration of the ordinance of baptism was as simple among our Baptist fathers as it well could be. When the church and candidates were assembled at the water's side, the pastor would open the services by calling for a suitable hymn. It was sung with feeling and pathos. Then followed a short address, sometimes to the candidates, explaining to them the need of consecrating themselves to the service of Christ, or, perhaps, expounding the significance of baptism. Sometimes he would exhort the church to watch over the young lambs that were coming into their fold. Or he might make a loving appeal to the unconverted, persuading them to come to Jesus. Then one by one, and sometimes two by two, he would gently lead them to their watery grave and bury them with Christ in baptism.

The effect of such baptisms we shall never know till we get to heaven. I will tell you, however, a few things that I have seen and heard. I have seen a mother overcome with holy joy because her daughter was one of several others who were about to put on Christ in baptism. The emotion overflowed and she praised God aloud for his goodness to her beloved child.

Again, I have seen a man, who was a sinner, weep before a large congregation when he led his wife whom he loved to the water's edge and gave her to the minister to be baptized. Then, at another time, there



was a gay young man at a baptism. He had, while the people were gathering, not a serious thought about him. The services were conducted as usual, with no extra occurrences. But that young man confessed to a friend that the service from its very beginning to its close had affected him with unexpected and deep solemnity. What became of him afterwards I do not know, but the incident is significant. Here I must stop. It is enough for me to say that the memory of my baptism affords me some of the sweetest reminiscences of my life. And no doubt the same was true with the thousands of Baptist preachers who lived and died in Georgia during the last eighty years.

I tell you, brethren, there has been an unseen power in our baptisms. And is it to be wondered at? Did not Jesus say to his disciples: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?" And it is worthy of notice that he gave this promise in connection with the formula of baptism.

Now, what I have said in the foregoing paragraphs is not new to Georgia Baptists of to-day. Thank God, we still have the baptism of our fathers. But do we appreciate it as we ought? Are our pastors sufficiently careful so to minister it as not to abate its solemnity, nor to hinder its effect?

If the lives and conduct of Baptists were truly as scriptural as is their baptism, they would be an irresistible power in promoting the kingdom of Christ. May the Lord make our lives as pure as our creed—the Word of God.

## CHAPTER XII.

### OLD-TIME CHURCHES (CONTINUED).

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#### SECTION ONE.

##### A CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

OUR Baptist fathers believed in a call to the ministry with full assurance of faith. It was a settled item of their creed that no man should take this office unto himself unless he was "called of God as Aaron was" (Heb. v. 4). As long ago as I can remember, these words were sure to be quoted when any attempt was made to explain the way into the Christian ministry. Those good brethren did not perceive that the writer to the Hebrews, when he used those words, was not speaking of the Christian ministry at all, but only of the Jewish priesthood. Failing to notice this fact, they applied the words to ministers of the gospel and made, therefore, a divine call an essential condition for admission to the ministry and, accordingly, it became an established rule among them to admit no one to ordination who could not give satisfactory evidence of having received such a call.

This rule has been perpetuated in our churches to the present day. It is true there are other qualifications besides a divine call that are deemed essential for ordination, but a divine call has been as much insisted upon as any other and especially by our Baptist fathers in Georgia. Were they right?

They who ignore the direct agency of the Holy Spirit in the religious life of a Christian will, of course, regret the rule and will contend that the fathers were wrong in adopting it. But those who believe in such agency of the Holy Spirit need not find any difficulty in answering the above question emphatically in the affirmative. Admit that our fathers supported the rule by one text, which, as has been already shown, was not relevant, it does not follow that they were wrong; because the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as given in the New Testament, would justify us, *a priori*, in expecting that he would exercise his agency in calling and qualifying men for so important a service as the preaching of the "glorious gospel of the blessed God." How can we suppose, for a moment, that the Holy Spirit should exercise his agency in "helping the infirmities" of the humblest saint and in "teaching him how to pray as he ought," and in "making intercessions for him with groanings that can not be uttered," and yet be indifferent to the selection of those who are to go forth to contend for the truth against all the powers of darkness? Such a thought is simply preposterous. This *a priori* argument might well be deemed sufficient, even if it stood alone. But it is triumphantly sustained by Paul's testimony.

His testimony is found in Rom. xii. 3-8; I Cor. xii. 4-11; Eph. iv. 8-11. I can not conveniently quote these passages. If the reader, however, will turn to them and carefully read and compare them, he will discover that all special gifts bestowed upon church members that were to be exercised in public for the benefit of others and for the advancement of the gospel among men were bestowed by "one and the same Spirit, di-

viding to each one severally even as he will." These gifts include the preaching of the gospel. And forasmuch as it, as well as all the others, was bestowed by the sovereign will of the Spirit, it follows that its bestowment constituted to all intents and purposes a divine call to the ministry of the Word. It happens, therefore, that the fathers were right in demanding from every one who sought admission with their sanction and good will to that most sacred office a reasonable evidence of having received a divine call to the work.

In view of the foregoing facts we may well be proud of our spiritual ancestors. When we remember how little learning they had and to what extent they were dependent upon the Bible only for all that they knew, we are compelled to admire not only their loyalty to what they believed to be the truth, but also their wonderful correctness in the interpretation of the Scriptures. True they found some passages which they could not comprehend. Others they may have treated allegorically when they were only literal narratives, and some they may have misapplied; but as to matters of faith and practice they were, indeed, seldom mistaken. They certainly were not mistaken when they believed in a divine call to the ministry. But what are the tests of such a call?

This question implies that it is possible to be deceived in this matter. Both the church and the applicant may be deceived, and thus one may be admitted to the ministry whom God has not called to that work. This melancholy fact invests the above question with grave importance. I wish I could answer it as fully as it deserves, but I can offer only a few suggestions.

In the first place, I think it may be assumed that the Holy Spirit does not call any man who is not truly regenerated to be an evangelist—i. e., a preacher of the gospel—or a pastor or bishop in the church. If this be true, then all the evidences of a true regeneration become a part of the evidences that one may be called to the ministry. But the evidences of regeneration are common to all true Christians. And we learned in a former chapter that no one should be admitted to baptism and the church without these evidences; then much more, no one should be admitted to the ministry without them. The case may be concisely stated thus: The Holy Spirit does not call all true Christians to the ministry, but every one whom he does call must be a true Christian. And, therefore, his being indeed a child of God is an essential evidence that he is at least within the reach of the Spirit's call.

Another test of a divine call may be found in one's conformity to the character of a bishop as described by Paul (I. Tim. iii. 2-7). The passage is too long to quote. It must suffice to say that the character drawn by Paul was intended to fit all the conditions of human life. But those conditions vary in different individuals. Paul speaks of the bishop whom he describes as a married man and as having a family. Now Paul could not have meant that a bishop, elder or pastor (these terms are only different titles of the same office) must of necessity be a married man, for that would have excluded himself and other apostles. He meant only this: That a married man to be a bishop should have but one wife and should rule his household in a proper manner. In a word, a bishop or pastor of today must have the character of the one which Paul

described just as far as his conditions and opportunities will allow. And having such a character is an evidence that the Spirit may have called him.

There is yet another test which deserves to be noticed. It is found in the candidate's own experience. And this is the test which is the most important of all; for without it, unless he is a willful hypocrite, he would never consent to be ordained even if his brethren should advise it.

But suppose he is not a hypocrite, but a true Christian—willing to serve the Master in any way that may open before him.

Now, when we see such a man as this, after advice with his pastor and other pious friends, consenting to be set apart to the work of the ministry, we may know that he has what he thinks is a good reason for doing so. And that reason is found in the exercises of his own mind and heart. These exercises, carried on in the realm of his own consciousness make up an experience which is regarded as his "call to the ministry," which means that the experiences are the evidence of the call. It is, therefore, just as proper for the church to require a candidate for the ministry to give an account of his call to that work, as it is to require a candidate for baptism to give an account of his conversion.

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#### SECTION TWO.

##### WHAT CONSTITUTES A CALL TO THE MINISTRY?

The importance of this question deserves a brief notice. During the first century of Baptist history in Georgia the attractions to the pulpit were very few. It

promised no emolument or worldly glory. On the contrary, an entrance into the work of preaching the gospel demanded, from the very start, self-denial, sacrifice and hard labor, often attended with severe privations. Nor were these trials limited to the preacher only. Had this been so, he might have borne them with greater resignation. But the good wife shared fully the privations of her husband, while she had burdens of her own that were largely increased when he was away filling his regular appointments, or making a missionary tour to the regions beyond.

Another obstacle to one's entering the ministry in those days has been often alluded to in these reminiscences. It was the want of educational advantages. How could a plain man, without an education, undertake to expound to others that gospel which is declared to be the wisdom of God? Looking at the case from a human standpoint, it is truly wonderful that in those days any one should have consented to become a preacher. But the mystery is solved as soon as we admit that he was called of God by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Let us then consider what are the constituent elements of such a call. They may be divided into two classes. Some are found in the soul itself. These are invisible and known only to him who has felt their influence. For this reason they may be named the subjective elements of a divine call. Others are found outside of us. These we can see and hear and touch. Hence they may be named the objective elements of a call. The subjective elements are perhaps the most important. They are impressions, feelings, inclina-



tions, love and desires, having their place in the soul itself and culminating at length in one steady earnest purpose to go forth, with God's help, to proclaim the "glad tidings" of salvation to dying men and women, whether at home or abroad.

I have given only a general statement of the case. Let me amplify a little. The experience above mentioned may include on one side a joyful sense of all the glory involved in the saint's salvation and on the other side a profound sense of the awful doom of the sinner. The soul impressed by the touch of the Spirit with these vivid pictures would naturally become affected with intense feelings of thanksgiving for the saved, and of sympathy, pity, and love for the lost. These again, under the same Spirit, would lead on to earnest desires and active efforts to lift the lost from the sinner's doom up to the glories of the saints. All these affections, having their place in the soul of one who is seeking to know what the Lord would have him to do, may be well regarded as the voices of the Spirit calling him to the ministry of the Word. So much for the subjective elements of such a call.

The objective elements are no less real. They are made up of a series of providences so adjusted and directed by the unseen Spirit as to lead the subject of them straight into the pulpit. These providences are sometimes apparently trivial events—so trivial, indeed, that but for the results flowing from them they would not be remembered for a week. I know two cases that illustrate this point. One is the case of Dr. Albert Spalding. When quite a young man, while a student

at Mercer University, it happened one day that a friend said to him in substance: "Brother Spalding, I heard Doctor Dagg this morning say of you, 'Brother Spalding ought to devote himself to the ministry.'" That was all; the young man smiled and went his way. But only recently I heard that dear brother confess that those brief words, coming from such a source, so impressed his mind that he began to inquire what the Lord would have him to do. We all know the result. For about forty years he has been a faithful laborer in the harvest-fields of the Master.

The case of Dr. W. L. Kilpatrick affords another example. He too was a student at Mercer. On a certain day he happened to be in conversation with one of the professors, who it seems had been thinking that his young friend ought to be a preacher. The professor embraced the opportunity to talk to him upon the subject. In kind and gentle words he tried to set before him the claims of the ministry upon his heart and life, and earnestly advised him to seek, with humble prayer, how he might most successfully serve the Lord. Many years afterwards I heard Brother Kilpatrick allude to that conversation as the very beginning of his call to the ministry. It was then he took the first step in that noble life which has placed his name high on the roll of honor among Georgia Baptists.

The world may laugh at such incidents as these, and ascribe the importance we give them to an idle superstition. But we know that nothing is so small as to be beneath our Father's notice, and no means are too trivial to become efficient in the hands of his Holy Spirit. So it was in the cases mentioned. The words spoken

were few and simple, but somehow they deeply impressed the hearts of those young brethren, somehow they were never forgotten, and somehow those brethren when far advanced in life, referred to those words as giving them their first impulse towards the ministry.

What does all this mean? Does it not mean that through those objective words the Holy Spirit was calling those young men to their appointed work?

Now these two cases may be generalized thus: When a good brother discovers, in any way, that his pious friends or his pastor, or all together, are somehow thinking of him as a suitable man for the ministry, he should certainly consider the matter prayerfully and earnestly. It may be that the approbation of his brethren is the medium through which the Spirit is whispering his gentle call to the path of duty. Indeed this conclusion becomes certain, when we remember that the very qualifications which have enabled the young man to win the approbation of his brethren are the gifts of the Spirit. And in the same way, the honest inquirer may safely interpret any and all of those outward providences that shed light upon his pathway.

Then, when these objective evidences are carried inward, and added to the subjective affections already explained, they form together a proof of a divine call to the ministry that need not be doubted.

It has been shown that the old-time Baptists believed firmly in the reality of a divine call to the ministry. But many of them had some queer notions in regard to it. Not such, however, as to affect its reality. In this they believed. And hence every applicant for admission into the ministry was subjected to a critical examination as to his call.

## SECTION THREE.

## ORDINATIONS—DEACONS.

The Baptist churches of America, as far as I know, have always inducted men into the ministerial office by the authority of the church with the aid of a council of elders, sometimes called a presbytery. Being themselves ministers in good standing, it was thought that they were better able to judge of the fitness of a candidate for the ministry than the members of the church would be if left to themselves; and their official position was supposed to qualify them to carry through the whole ceremony of setting apart the candidate for the work to which he was appointed.

Here two questions occur. Who shall choose or elect these officials? how shall they be set apart to their work? Baptists answer the first question by claiming that the New Testament clothes the church itself with full authority to elect its own officers. And in answer to the second, they claim that those chosen should be set apart to their official work in the way indicated by the example and teachings of the apostles, which, in the case of deacons, was by prayer and the imposition of hands, and in the case of ministers, by fasting and prayer and imposition of hands. These modes of setting apart church members to some official position are what we call ordinations.

Our Baptist fathers practiced these ordinations with great care and with deep solemnity.

In the case of a deacon, they would call in one or two neighboring ministers to unite with the pastor in performing the service. The brother-elect was placed be-

fore elders. They proceeded to examine into his qualifications for the office. He was expected to relate his first religious experience that the elders might judge of the genuineness of his piety, and then he was examined on the doctrines of the gospel. When the elders were satisfied with his fitness for the office, then, with the concurrence and under the authority of the church previously given, the elders kneeled around the kneeling brother and one of them led in prayer, while all laid their hands upon his head. With that prayer, the whole church, usually on their knees, fervently united. When the prayer was ended, it was not uncommon for one of the council to address the newly appointed deacon, that he might explain to him the duties of his office and emphasize their great importance. And it was also in order for another elder to follow the first speaker with an address suited to the church, designed to explain their obligation to co-operate willingly and promptly with their deacons in all the services required of them. Making allowance for slight variations, such was the ordination of a deacon in the old-time churches of Georgia Baptists.

I can remember when no Baptist in Georgia would venture to question its Scriptural authority. And I well remember when and by whom I first heard it questioned. But I prefer not to mention names. It is enough to say that the argument against the practice was based upon two assumptions. One was this, that the "seven brethren" chosen by the church at Jerusalem, who were full of the Holy Spirit, and whom the apostles set apart to a special service, were not deacons at all, and therefore the setting of them apart by

prayer and the imposition of hands can furnish no precedent for setting apart officers of a different kind in the same way.

Now, it is clear that this argument is based upon the assumption that the seven brethren set apart by ordination to a new and special service in the church at Jerusalem were not deacons. For the truth of this assumption there is no valid evidence. It is true, Luke does not call them deacons, but this omission is easily explained. The polity of the church was in its inchoate state. Jesus did not enact in advance a complete system of polity. He left it, in part, to be developed gradually as circumstances might require, under the guidance of his inspired apostles. And it is interesting to notice that the very first addition made by them to the polity of the church was the creation of a new order of church officials. They were appointed at first without a name, being designated only as "the seven." The design of their appointment, however, is clearly stated. It was that they should take charge of the resources of the church and so disburse them as to give to all what was just and equal, in order that the apostles might be freed from such work and be able to devote themselves exclusively to the "ministry of the Word." And this clearly means that they were also designed to help the apostles, who at that time were the acting elders of the church at Jerusalem.

Now, it came to pass in after years that churches were planted far and wide over many parts of the Roman Empire. And we learn, from the writings of the apostles, that there was in those churches an order of servants called deacons. The word deacon is a gen-

eric term, it is true, of wide application, according to its etymology. Its Greek origin in the New Testament is often applied to apostles and preachers, and when so applied it is rendered in our translation "minister," or by the more general term, "servant." Nevertheless, there was an order of servants in the churches distinct from all others, who were called, specifically, deacons.

Now it is, I think, universally conceded that to this class of officers was assigned the care of all the temporal interests of the churches, so that the pastors (or bishops, or elders) might give undivided attention to the spiritual welfare of their people. This being granted, it follows that the duties assigned to the deacons were identical, in kind, with those assigned to the "seven" at Jerusalem. Therefore, we may conclude that the seven, though not so called, were really the very order of servants which was afterwards specifically named deacons. They were deacons, and hence the mode of their ordination does furnish us a clear example, under apostolic authority, which it is wise and safe to follow. Nay, are we not bound to follow it?

Those who reject the ordination of the "seven" as an example for us to follow, make another bold assumption. They say that the apostles who laid hands on the seven did so that they might confer upon them the Holy Spirit or some special spiritual gift.

Upon this assumption it is argued that as the power of imparting the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands passed away with the apostles, it is now utterly useless to continue it.



But how do those who reason thus know that the apostles laid their hands upon the seven to impart to them some spiritual gift? This is a mere assumption, and altogether improbable. For the seven were already "full of the Holy Spirit," which means, at least, that they were men of deep and fervent piety, and hardly needed extra gifts from the hands of the apostles. They, indeed, had the power of conferring spiritual gifts upon whom they would, but it is reasonable to suppose that they would impart only to those who lacked. Let us then look for another reason.

Notice here that the apostles knew that they were about to establish a new order of servants; one which the church at Jerusalem already needed, and which all other churches, as they came into life and activity, would be sure to need. Was it not, therefore, discreet and proper to make the introduction of these new servants into their office impressive and solemn? If so, what better method could have been adopted than the one which we find reported? The record is very brief, but let us notice the several items which it gives us. (a) The men were elected by the whole church as an independent body. (b) The men chosen were expected to be "men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." (c) They were placed before the apostles. (d) "And when they had prayed, they laid hands on them," not to confer a spiritual gift, but in connection with the prayer to confer upon them only official position. This the ceremony did do; and we do not know that it did anything else. I think, therefore, the argument based upon the second assumption is fairly answered.

Now, our Baptist fathers, as a rule, were not learned

men or critics. And yet they took substantially the same view of this interesting subject that I have presented. This will appear more fully when I come to speak of the ordination of ministers. Let us still seek the old paths.

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SECTION FOUR.

ORDINATIONS—MINISTERS.

The two services were very similar, both in their conditions and in their forms. In each case the candidate was expected to be a man of deep piety, and in each case he was set apart to his official position by prayer and the imposition of hands. But in the case of ministers something more was required. They were expected to be not only pious men, but also men who could give credible evidence of a divine call to the ministry. And they were set apart to their work not only by prayer and the imposition of hands, but these were preceded by fasting. At least, the members of the council, or presbytery, and the candidate were expected to come to the service fasting. This was considered of so much importance that if one of the appointed council happened to forget himself and to eat his breakfast on the day set apart for the service, he felt himself disqualified for assisting in the ordination. He would take a seat with the church members as only a spectator. If in this we should admit that he was overscrupulous, still the fact shows with what profound reverence those early Georgia saints approached an ordination service.

When the elders whom the church had invited to

attend were assembled at the proper time and place, and were duly organized, then the candidate, with the consent and under the sanction of his church, came before the council.

I should have mentioned, however, that the candidate, before the ordination service began, was usually expected to preach on that morning in order to let the invited elders hear him, that they might have some personal knowledge of his gifts as a public speaker. After this the candidate took his seat before the elders, who proceeded with the service. The chairman of the council conducted the examination.

He first requested the candidate to relate his experience, then to give a statement of his doctrinal views. The next step was to test his personal character and his life. To this end the chairman could either recite verbatim, or read from the Scriptures, the qualifications, given in I. Tim. iii. 1-7, which should adorn the life and character of one who desires to be made a bishop (elder or pastor). Here they touched his social and religious standing, both in the church and in the outside world. Of course they did not expect the candidate to speak for himself in regard to these qualifications. They knew that the church had enjoyed the best opportunity to know the brother's standing, and, therefore, they could take it for granted that the church would not have given him their indorsement and called him to ordination if they had not believed that he possessed the requisite qualifications. Nevertheless, the Apostle's specifications were publicly read, and it was assumed, if no objection was made, that the candidate fairly met their requirements.

The next step in the examination was to have the

candidate give some account of his call to the ministry; for our Baptist fathers believed with all their hearts in the reality of such a call. And their experiences on the subject were sometimes wonderful to tell. Some of them seemed to feel that it might show a little self-conceit if they should hearken at once to certain impressions which might indicate the drawings of the Spirit. They, therefore, from modesty and self-distrust, would resist the wooings of the Spirit for months and sometimes for years.

Such hesitation and delay not infrequently afforded occasion for the intervention of startling and sad providences. A man deeply impressed with his duty to labor for the salvation of souls, yet resisting his impressions, might be suddenly visited by some unexpected calamity. It might be the death of some beloved member of his household. Being already burdened with his inward experiences, is it strange that such a one should regard his bereavement as a judgment of God designed to make him yield to the monitions of the Spirit? And is it strange that, in the face of such incidents, a brother before a council should relate them as among the reasons why he believed that the Lord had called him?

However, it is pleasant and, no doubt, correct to believe that a great many of the old-time preachers did not wait to be scourged, as it were, into the ministry. They wisely gave heed to the impressions that weighed upon their hearts in respect to the question of duty before them. These impressions may have varied greatly in different persons. But I think there are three that are manifestly found in all true ministers. One is a

sincere desire to promote the glory of God in the advancement of his kingdom. Another is a deep, abiding concern for the ungodly, accompanied with a strong desire, if possible, to lead them to Jesus. And the third is an earnest desire to build up the children of God in their faith and to promote, as far as possible, their growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.

These impressions may differ very much in degree, and they may be described in various terms, but each has its basis in the inspired Word. The first rests upon the injunction, "Whatsoever ye do, do all for the glory of God." The second rests upon the Savior's words, "Go, therefore, and make disciples among all nations." And the third rests upon his words to Peter, "Feed my lambs"—"Feed my sheep." And taken together, they voice the sentiment of the Apostle when he says, "The love of Christ constraineth us" . . . "That we should live not for ourselves, but for him who died for us and rose again."

When these impressions become paramount in a believer's heart, there is a preacher in embryo. It will not be long before he will appear before the council, and it will not be difficult for him to relate his call to the ministry.

But it is time to return to the ordination.

The preliminary examination being closed, then the presbytery, or council, proceeded to the ordination proper. This was accomplished, as in the case of the deacons, with the consecrating prayer and the laying on of hands. Then followed one or more addresses, first to the candidate, designed to impress upon him the obligations which he had assumed and the great work

upon which he had entered; and second, to the church, designed to remind them of their obligations to give to the brother, whom they had caused to be set apart to the work of preaching the gospel, all the moral support, sympathy and encouragement that might be in their power to give.

When the addresses were ended, the exercises were finally closed with an appropriate hymn, accompanied with the right hand of fellowship given to the newly made preacher as a token of the sympathy and love which the presiding elders and the church felt for him. Thus they sent him forth upon the great and solemn work assigned him.

I think that I have fairly set forth in the foregoing paragraphs what was the usual ordination service in our old-time churches of Georgia Baptists. And I am glad to hope and believe that our churches of the present generation follow very closely the example of our fathers in their ordination services.

But did our fathers have Scriptural authority for their methods? They certainly did in every essential particular. We find it in the thirteenth chapter of Acts. We there learn that in the church at Antioch were prophets and teachers: viz., Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen and Saul. In all, five persons are named. We learn also that two of them—Barnabas and Saul—had not yet been set apart by any formal or visible action to the work to which God had called them. Subsequent events plainly show that that work was the preaching of the gospel—the work of the ministry, as it is called in our day. Again, we learn that while they were engaged in some sort of service, “the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Paul for

the work whereunto I have called them." How was this separation accomplished? The record gives the answer: "Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Simeon, Lucius and Manaen were, no doubt, the officiating ministers. The narrative is very short, but as far as it goes, it certainly affords a clear example in all essential particulars of what we call an ordination of a minister.

I close with a single admonition. Let us most carefully avoid all departures from the New Testament. The only example of the ordination of a minister found in the New Testament mentions fasting as a part of the service. And our fathers observed it. Let not our churches now fail to follow their example in adhering closely to the inspired Word.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### OLD-TIME CHURCHES (CONCLUDED).

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#### SECTION ONE.

#### THEIR SOCIAL LIFE.

IN approaching this topic let us bear in mind that Georgia Baptists have generally lived in the country. During the early decades of the century there were hardly a half-dozen towns in the State that had in them a Baptist church. And even now the great majority of our people are in the country, and there are their churches. Under such conditions it is not surprising that their social privileges, especially in the early days, were greatly hindered.

Nevertheless they did make visits occasionally to one another. The visits were not "pop calls." The visitor, or visitors, would make arrangements to be absent from home at least for a day, and sometimes for several days. It was perfectly in order for the lady visitors to take their work-baskets with them, that they might not have to sit with idle hands during the passing hours. And it was equally in order for the kind hostess, after she had greeted her visitors and put away their shawls and bonnets and seated them in her best room, to withdraw awhile to the pantry to arrange with the cook for a dinner that should be worthy of her guests. Having thus provided for the claims of hospitality, she would return to her company, and, sitting down by her own work-basket and

resuming her task where she had left it, she would open with her friends the fountains of social enjoyment, aided by her husband and perhaps by her older children.

Besides these occasional visits, there were a few other opportunities of social intercourse. There were the quilting parties, which some of our older readers may remember. To these may be added the barbecues, which are still well known as means of bringing into social contact chiefly the male population of the country. Then there were the everlasting marriage festivals that have survived the ravages of time and are likely to continue to the end of the present era.

I have made special mention of these phases of social life, because church members, of all denominations, felt themselves at liberty to enjoy them. But after all, they afforded only an occasional opportunity of coming together, for the reason that in any given neighborhood years might pass without any one of them. However, as often as there was opportunity, it was deemed admissible for religious people freely to share them, for they brought together the best elements of each neighborhood and cultivated among the people pleasant and lasting friendships.

But the social life of our fathers and mothers of the olden time had in it an element that deserves to be most strongly emphasized. This was their religious conversation.

I do not mean to claim this element of social life for Baptists only, but it is a matter of joyful thanksgiving to God that they possessed it (and in a high degree) in common with all truly religious people of other denominations. They might meet on social visits, as

already mentioned, or at the quilting, or at a dining, or at a wedding—no matter where—they would not be together long without speaking of Jesus and his love, or of some sweet passage of Scripture, or of some item in the Christian's experience. In a word, religion, when Christians were together, and time and opportunity allowed, was sure to be, in all its phases, the leading staple of conversation.

Some good effects of this custom were to strengthen their own spirituality and to promote their own growth in grace. Another effect was to impress their children with the importance of religion. When they saw how much their parents delighted to talk about religion, they could not fail to see that their parents regarded it as the chief concern of this present life. So great a place did religious conversation hold in the social life of early Georgia Baptists.

Another element of that life was found in their social worship.

What is social worship? It is the worship of two or three pious souls who have met for that purpose in the name of Jesus. The number may be few or many. The place may be anywhere under the blue sky that Christians may choose to meet that they may worship the Father in spirit and in truth. It is not too much to say that in social worship the social life of the saints reaches the very highest development that it can ever reach this side of heaven. For it is social worship that weaves the golden threads of Christian fellowship that bind together, in one body, the consecrated brotherhood of the saints. Such is the power of social worship.

When a father and a mother have around them a

family of children whom they would train up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they can not safely dispense with family prayer. And this is the first form of social worship. What a privilege it is for anxious parents! It makes their house a Bethel, nay, it makes the little chamber, when they gather around the old Bible that lies upon the stand ever ready to pour forth from its inspired pages the light of the great "Shekinah," the antitype of that "most Holy Place." with its golden altar and mysterious "mercy seat," which lay behind the curtain within the ancient tabernacle (see Heb. x. 1-23). Can we ever overestimate the value of family prayer? The father who conducts it is the priest of his household. He brings to the domestic altar, not the blood of dumb animals, but the blood of Christ, "which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." Yes, in many a poor man's cottage, in many a widow's home, there goes up to heaven, through faith in the crucified One, a purer worship than even Solomon was ever able to render.

Now, I do not claim that family prayer was universally observed in every household of our Baptist fathers, but I do say that as far as my memory can reach it was not the exception but the rule in truly pious families.

Again we have another form of social worship. It is found in the prayer-meeting. This is only the expansion of family worship. It is a meeting together of one or more from several families for prayer and praise and thanksgiving, and for hearing some Scriptural lesson read and expounded. Under favorable conditions it is the natural outgrowth of family worship, with a larger circle of social influence and of re-

ligious power. How did the old-time churches regard the prayer-meeting? They dearly loved it.

I am sure that this is true, although they did not often have the privilege of attending a prayer-meeting. Their churches were, with few exceptions, located in the country, which was so sparsely settled that church members were too widely scattered to meet at night, with any sort of regularity, either at private houses or at the meeting-house. They were, therefore, limited for the most part to occasional opportunities. These occurred sometimes during district and associational gatherings. At such times delegates and visitors would be distributed in groups among the neighboring families for the night in sufficient numbers to make up a prayer-meeting. I know from personal experience how delightful such prayer-meetings could be made. The services at the meeting-house during the day and in the neighboring cottages at night afforded much enjoyment to pious people.

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## SECTION TWO.

### THEIR PUBLIC WORSHIP.

This was held, with a few exceptions, but once a month. Only in the cities and in some of the more important towns were the Baptists able to have public worship more frequently. And many of them had to be satisfied with two Sundays.

At such meetings the pastor, if present, would of course preach, unless a visiting minister was on hand. In that case the pastor would generally invite the visiting brother to preach for him, and it was not unusual for both to preach, sometimes with and sometimes

without an intermission. When the visitor came unexpectedly and no second service was anticipated, then the two sermons would both be preached, one right after the other, without any recess; but if two services were anticipated, and the good sisters had brought refreshments, then there would be two services—one in the morning, followed by a recess, during which it was in order to enjoy the refreshments provided by the sisters. It is true, they had no booths woven of green boughs, for they did not need them. They had for their shelter the rich foliage of the majestic oaks and other lofty trees that shaded the ground around the meeting-house, and yet, a Bible reader, in looking upon such a scene, would be reminded of “the feast of tabernacles” which the ancient Hebrews loved so well. It was a scene of social enjoyment, modified to a large extent by the prevalence of the religious sentiment, and the effect was to cultivate the most friendly relations among all the people of the neighborhood, and to develop among church members a deeper sense of Christian fellowship.

On such occasions, the preaching was based, in a large measure, upon the Christian’s experience. This was a subject which the preachers understood. They could present it in all its many-sided aspects, and they knew the Scriptures that served to illustrate it from Genesis to Revelation. Hence it became in their hands a mighty means of “strengthening their brethren” and of building them up in the faith and hope of the gospel.

Nor was this all. While such preaching was more especially designed to instruct and to comfort believers, yet it was by no means intended only for them.

It often passed beyond the saints and carried enlightenment and comfort to many a mourning soul and troubled penitent. Indeed, these sermons of the experience often sent arrows of swift conviction to pierce the hearts of the ungodly. When the preacher had strengthened and comforted his people with the sweet realities of a genuine experience, he could then, with great power and pathos, appeal to the unconverted before him with that fearful warning "the sinner must be born again"—a warning which the Christian's experience both strongly emphasizes and clearly confirms. The sinner must be born again. And the preachers of the olden time made the people feel it.

In noticing the customs of our Baptist fathers when met for worship, it is certainly in order to say something about their singing.

Religious music is as old as Moses and Miriam. It was illustrated by David, and became at an early day an important part of the services that were offered to the great Jehovah. And Jesus gave it his sanction, for we learn that when he was with his disciples for the last time, they sang a hymn before they went forth to meet the dreadful scenes that were so soon to follow. Then, years afterwards, we read that Paul and Silas, in the prison at Philippi, cheered the midnight hours with sacred song.

With such antecedents, it is not strange that music should accompany the worship of the saints through all the succeeding centuries. In the face of such facts, we need not doubt that it was a part of the divine purpose to make singing one medium through which the pious worshiper might lift his thanksgivings and his longings up to the very throne of God. That it was



designed to be such a medium is clearly taught by Paul. Speaking to the Ephesian church he says: "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord."

According to these words, sacred song should be the outward expression of the inward affections of the soul towards God.

The world has its songs; thus we hear the lover praising in song the charms of his mistress. Then we hear the votary of nature describing in song her diversified beauties as they shine on earth from all its varied scenery, or glow in the skies with all the glory of the stars. Again, we hear the patriot celebrating in song the good and the great, the heroes and the statesmen—in a word, all distinguished benefactors, who have lived to honor and to bless the land of their nativity. In all these cases it is manifest that the function of song is to express the feelings of the soul.

In the cases above mentioned, it is obvious that in each case the music should be rightly adapted to the object which it is designed to celebrate. Who would think of celebrating the towering heights of Mont Blanc, with all its awful wonders of crag and cliff and avalanche, in the same strain with which a lover would serenade his sweetheart?

But there is an object higher than Mont Blanc, more awful than the avalanche, and yet, more lovely than the flowery earth, or the garnished skies, and far more worthy of gratitude and of thanksgiving than any human friend or benefactor can ever be. That object is God. And it is in his worship that song should find its highest and noblest exercise. And surely it ought to be in measures worthy of the exalted being whose praises it is designed to celebrate.

Now where shall we find such music? Not in the organ, or cornet, or flute, or violin. These are, or

should be, only accompaniments. When they stand alone, their volume of sound can rise no higher than the vaulted ceiling of the auditorium. Such music can be found only in the "Scriptural songs" wherewith the worshiper makes sweet "melodies in his heart" unto God.

I think this was the kind of music which was often heard in the old-time churches. They wanted music that would voice their religious affections of every kind, and their hymns were adapted to supply this want. They might be sometimes affected with penitential sorrow, perplexed with painful doubts, or they might be in full assurance of faith rejoicing in the love of God and in the hope of heaven, or they might be melted with tender compassion for the ungodly who are without hope. Well, there were hymns suited to express all these emotions, and when our fathers and mothers sang them, their holy desires were wafted up to heaven. There may have been but little culture, there may have been some harsh sounds and perhaps some discords, but the Lord, in spite of such imperfections, could discern the melodies that came up from the heart, and these he graciously accepted. Oh, that we could have again some of the old-time hymns! Well do I remember them, and greatly do I miss them.

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SECTION THREE.

THEIR DOCTRINAL VIEWS.

Throughout these reminiscences, it has been assumed, and often mentioned in terms, that our Baptist fathers were sound in their faith. But before leaving the old-time churches it may be well to treat their doctrinal views a little more fully than has yet been done.

The Baptists of Georgia, from the very beginning of their development in this State, acknowledged no au-

thority in matters of "faith and of practice," except the Scriptures. It is true, each church had what was called its abstract of principles, or its confession of faith. But this abstract, or confession, was adopted by each church, as an independent body, for itself, and it was held to be valid only so far as its subscribers believed it to be in harmony with the Bible. In controversies with their opponents, Baptists never appeal to the confessions found in their church records, but directly and exclusively to the inspired Word. And so did our fathers of the long ago. They were loyal to the Scriptures as they understood them.

I do not mean to claim that those early Baptists had no diversities of opinion among them. This could hardly be expected. When we consider how people differ from one another in environment, in intelligence, in habits of thought, and in the structure of their sensibilities, is it any wonder that they should differ somewhat when they undertake to discuss the grave questions of religious truth? Is it not rather wonderful that they should agree at all? And yet our fathers did agree to such an extent that they were one people in Christian fellowship.

I do not propose here to formulate their creed, for their creed was the Bible, and to attempt to outline its teachings would far exceed my limits. I propose rather to state the things they believed in a way of my own, and yet all the essential elements of their faith.

1. They believed in the God of the Bible. I put the item in this form because it distinguishes them, at once, from every other class of theists known upon the face of the earth. This distinction has become important in these modern times. There are people who

openly declare the God of the Bible to be unworthy of their love or worship. Then there are others who, less bold, will not go quite so far in their blasphemy. They even profess to accept the Bible as in some degree a revelation from God. But those passages that express the burning wrath of God against the wicked, that foretell the coming judgment and the perdition of ungodly men, are erased by a reckless criticism as altogether unworthy of their conceptions of what the character of God ought to be. Which means, that if the rejected passages should prove to be genuine, then these wise critics would claim that they could no longer reverence or love the God of the Bible. The God which they pretend to worship is a god which they have constructed for themselves under the dominating influence, not of right reason (as they proudly claim), but of their carnal sensibilities. And the thing which they have thus thought out is as truly an idol as if it had been cut by the hand of the sculptor from a block of marble.

Against all such perversions our Baptist fathers accepted the God of the Bible. And they claimed no other. Nay, they would have no other. Hence, it followed, as a matter of course, that their theology was the theology of the Bible. True, they could see the glory of God as it shines in the phenomena of nature; but they saw that glory more effulgent as it shines through the revelation which God has given of himself in his own inspired Word. In all this our fathers were thoroughly agreed.

2. In the next place, they believed all that the Bible teaches us about God. This, indeed, is a logical inference from what has gone before, but it may be useful

to notice briefly what the fathers believed that the Bible does teach about God. (a) They believed that God has revealed himself to us as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, constituting a compound Unity, which, in modern times, we have learned to call the "Holy Trinity." (b) They believed that this triune God is the creator of the heavens and of the earth, and of all that is in them. (c) They believed that he is a being absolutely perfect in all the attributes of his exalted nature, and is in fact the absolute sovereign of the universe which he has created, and its rightful Lawgiver and Ruler. (d) They also believed that God created man in his own image, or likeness, and endowed him with such faculties of mind and heart as qualified him to be an intelligent and voluntary agent, and a fit subject of moral government. In regard to all these points also, our Baptist fathers were in perfect agreement. But this is not all.

3. They believed that God had devised before the foundation of the world a plan for the salvation of mankind. Account for it as we may, it is a fact that the human race has suffered through all the centuries of its existence as if it had been from the beginning accursed of God. But behind the curse, there lay in the bosom of God a purpose of mercy. It was the great scheme of human redemption. Its first intimation to man was heard amidst the curses which drove him away from the Garden of Eden. It was then announced that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." These words spanned the dark cloud of divine wrath that overhung our first parents at the Garden of Eden with a bow of promise far more precious than the sevenfold arch that gilded the clouds

of the retiring deluge. This was a promise of exemption from only a future deluge of water, but the words at the Garden betokened a deliverance of men from the awful flood of moral guilt and ruin into which the great adversary had plunged them.

The scheme of redemption thus foretold brings to our view the three exalted persons of the Godhead. "The Father so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life." Then we learn that the Son, when speaking of his approaching death, said: "I lay down my life for the sheep; no man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Here it is clear he made himself a free-will offering to his Father as a ransom for his people. Then the Holy Spirit is often mentioned as the divine agent who gives efficiency to the Word of God upon the heart of the sinner that he may be quickened into spiritual life and become a child of God. Thus it is manifest that the triune God, in the great work of redemption, is One. Hence it is evident, and it is a great comfort to know it, that the Holy Three are working together in perfect fellowship for the salvation of lost sinners.

What has been said so far brings to our view another great truth. It is that the plan of salvation is founded upon the expiatory sufferings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who was the Son of God. He took upon himself our nature, sin only excepted, and made himself an offering for sin, that "God might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." The Scriptures abound with proof that Jesus "died for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."

So he became "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

I have already said that our Baptist fathers believed in the plan of salvation. And I feel sure that they also believed in the important truths which we have found to be included in its conditions and which have been briefly set forth in the foregoing paragraphs.

Our Baptist fathers believed in the fall of man from his first estate of innocence and purity into a state of moral guilt and pollution, and they believed that the effect of this fall of our first parents, from innocence to a state of guilt, was transmitted to their posterity to such an extent that every human being comes into the world with a proclivity to moral evil so intense that he inevitably falls into transgression and sin. This proclivity to moral evil is what we call human depravity.

Our fathers believed in this depravity. They sometimes called it "total depravity," and for doing so they were often severely criticized, and even ridiculed, by their opponents. Well, it is needless, at this late day, to discuss the propriety or impropriety of qualifying depravity with the word total. It is better, far better, to notice what the Scriptures say about it. We learn from them that the human heart is "desperately wicked," that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," and that men, by nature, are "dead in trespasses and in sins." Such are the terms in which man's moral condition is described in the Bible. It is certainly a condition of depravity so deep that the sinner, if left to himself, is, and must be, inevitably lost. And this is the depravity in which our early Baptists believed.



The doctrine of human depravity renders it logically necessary that the sinner, if he is ever saved, must be "born again." Simple as this proposition is, there are thousands, even of cultivated minds, who ignore the new birth. Nicodemus was one of this class. When, in John iii. 3, Jesus said to him, "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God," he did not know what the Savior meant. But our Baptist fathers had sense enough to see the necessity of the new birth. They knew that the sinner, being at enmity with God, not subject to his law but dead in trespasses and in sins must forever perish, unless he could be brought, somehow, into a new condition of life. By their confidence in the teachings of the Scriptures they were able to discover that the "new birth" which Jesus taught to Nicodemus metaphorically represents this coming into a new condition of life, and this they had realized in their own Christian experiences.

Their first condition of life, into which they had come by a literal and natural birth, was a condition of deep moral depravity. They did not love God, nor did they desire a knowledge of his ways. They were willing to be worldly-minded, hard-hearted and impenitent, and were, perhaps, indulging in many practical sins. And such was the degree of depravity that, if left to themselves, they would have chosen to live and die in that sad condition.

But it came to pass that they were brought within the reach of the preached gospel, and by its instrumentality, under the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, they were brought through the successive steps of the Christian's experience into a new condition of life.

Now this coming into a new condition of life is just what the Savior meant when he said: "Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God."

Notice the word "again." It is represented in the Greek by the word "anōthen." It has three meanings: viz., again, anew, from above. It is interesting to notice that each one of these meanings will translate the word "anōthen" so as to yield a good sense. If we say a man is born again, it means that he had been born before and is now born a second time. Well, that is true of the Christian, for he was first born into his natural life and afterwards into his spiritual life. If we say that a man is born anew, it means that he has left his old life and come into one that is new and fresh. This also is verified in the experience of the Christian. For of him it is written: "Old things have passed away, and all things have become new." And in the third place, if we say a man is born from above, the phrase is used figuratively to denote that he is born of God. And this, too, is confirmed by other Scriptures; for we learn that believers are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And again, it is said: "Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth." Therefore to be born from above, as already stated, is to be born of God.

The nature of the new birth is still more fully expressed, and yet on the same line of thought, in the fifth verse of the same chapter: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." When the metaphorical terms of this text are correctly interpreted the meaning of the Savior's words.

may be expressed in plain language thus: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be brought into life (which is to be born) through the instrumentality of divine truth (often represented in the Scriptures by water) and by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, he can not enter into the place where God reigns.

This paraphrase is in harmony with Dr. J. L. Dagg's interpretation of the text, and fully sustains the correctness of his definition of the new birth. I have not his definition before me, but it is to this effect, that the new birth denotes a great moral change of a sinner's affections towards God, analogous to a coming into a new life, of which God is the author, and whose manifestations are found in the sinner's desire to glorify God and to obey his commandments. This change is sometimes called a conversion, sometimes a change of heart, and sometimes it is spoken of as a new creation.

Our Baptist fathers believed with all their hearts in the necessity of this great moral change in the heart and life of the sinner before he could be prepared for heaven. And to describe its process through all the stages of the Christian's experience engaged a large proportion of their conversation and their preaching.

I have dwelt thus long on the new birth because of its transcendent importance. It is one of the distinctive doctrines of Christianity that separates it, by an immeasurable distance, from every other religion on this globe. And yet, strange as it may seem, two-thirds of all Christendom have for many centuries so merged it in water baptism that they have nothing left of the grand idea save a fruitless ceremony of their own invention. The baptismal font, and that for unconscious babes, is made to do the work of regeneration.

Only a few religious denominations of the present day stand for the doctrine of the new birth as it was taught by Jesus and his inspired apostles. But our Baptist fathers stood for it with unwavering fidelity. They found it in the words of Christ and they found his words illustrated in their own happy experiences.

Now, beloved brethren of the present day, let me close this paper with a word to you. You have succeeded to the responsibilities of your fathers. That you are spiritually and denominationally so prosperous is because they were so faithful. True, they were not perfect, they made some mistakes and held some queer notions but, for all that, they did contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and especially did they teach with all their hearts that

“The sinner must be born again,  
Or sink in endless woe.”

Let your choruses sound aloud this awful refrain till every soul shall hear it.

Election was also a cardinal point in the faith of our fathers, and their preachers gave it conspicuous place in their sermons. They believed that God knew from the beginning who would be saved. And then they believed that no sinner, if left to himself, would ever repent towards God and believe in Christ, inasmuch as he is by nature “at enmity with God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.” Putting these ideas together, our fathers were able to see that whoever is saved must be renewed in the spirit of his mind, that is, he must be quickened into spiritual life, by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit. In other words, no man can be saved without that great moral change

called the new birth, of which God is the author. And in every new birth God must take the initiative step. He must, of his own will, beget the sinner by his word of truth (see James i. 18). Each case is of his own will, which means of his own choice. When did God make choice of this or that sinner as a subject of his saving power? Surely his choice, or election, must be as old as his foreknowledge. Therefore the election must have been before the foundation of the world.

The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints is a logical sequence of the doctrine of election, so closely connected with it that to accept one is to accept the other. Those good people of whom I am writing believed in it, of course. They called it the "final perseverance of the saints." And to this day our Baptist folks are accustomed to use the same phrase. But it is not accurate, and, moreover, it puts a weapon into the hands of our opponents. They sometimes point to some backslider among us and tauntingly ask: "What has become of his perseverance?" The question is hard to answer.

The truth is, the phrase does not express exactly what it is used to express. The thing which our fathers believed in, and which is so closely connected with election, was the doctrine of the final preservation of the saints. This mode of expressing the certainty of the saint's salvation clearly suggests the divine power by which it is accomplished. For we read that the saint is "kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." This is by far a much safer reliance than can be found in the perseverance of the individual.

Our fathers gained great comfort from these doc-

trines. Think for a moment what the doctrine of election means. It means the certain salvation of a multitude whom no man can number. Remember, without election no one of Adam's apostate race would have been saved, for the whole race was dead in trespasses and in sins, and under sentence of condemnation. But God was moved with compassion for the lost race. Out of that compassion arose the great scheme of redemption by which he could offer free salvation to all who would accept it. But none would accept it. Here occurred the gravest problem in the counsels of the Godhead that can be found, perhaps, in all the annals of eternity. It was the election that solved this mighty problem. God, in the exercise of his infinite sovereignty, chose whom he would have to be saved. These are the people whom he foreknew, "whom he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." And these are the people whom, in the course of time, he has been effectually calling and sanctifying and glorifying (Rom. viii. 29, 30).

But for this electing grace, not one sinner would have been saved; for such is the depravity of human nature that if left to himself the sinner would not accept the gospel and Christ would have died in vain. But God, in foretelling the mission of his Son, has already declared, by the lips of his prophet Isaiah, that the great Messiah should "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied," which means that he should not die in vain.

To this divine purpose the Savior himself alludes. He says to the unbelieving multitude around him, "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." These

words mean that Jesus knew that he had a people secured to him, by the gift of the Father, whose salvation was assured. Therefore, Jesus knew that he should not die in vain—that his blood should redeem such a multitude of the lost as to satisfy the travail of his soul.

Such were the doctrines that our fathers loved. They found in them streams of living water flowing from the “smitten Rock” that cheered and comforted them. They were able to see that the powers of darkness might mass their forces round the globe, but they could never separate the elect of God from his eternal love (see Romans viii. 38, 39).

In treating of the doctrinal views of the old-time churches, I have thus far confined myself to those elements of faith for which they were generally distinguished. Thus far I have presented them as beacon-lights of orthodoxy to which the churches of to-day would do well to give good heed. And just here I would gladly stop. But it may be useful to notice briefly what may be called the other side.

While our early Baptists believed, with great harmony, in all the “doctrines of grace,” as they were often called, yet this common faith did not bring forth in all exactly the same fruit. The effect of that faith on some minds was to make them willing to live, not for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. Some reasoned, perhaps, in this way: I was a lost sinner, so completely in bondage to a depraved nature that if I had been left to myself I should have certainly perished, but God, for the great love wherewith he loved me, quickened my soul into spiritual life that I might believe and be saved. The



idea that that love was from the beginning only intensified its force. All who reasoned thus were ready to engage in every good work that promised glory to God or good to man. When, therefore, the great missionary enterprise burst upon them, they were prepared to meet it. They knew that Christ has a people by the gift of the Father who shall come to him and be saved, but they knew also that the gospel is the ordained instrumentality whereby the elect are to be gathered unto Christ. And, therefore, they were called "Missionary Baptists."

But all did not reason thus. Their argument was about this: God's purposes are fixed and immutable. Therefore the salvation of his elect is certain and man has nothing to do with it. Here was a most hurtful perversion of the doctrines of grace. Those who held to it were called anti-missionaries. But their opposition did not stop at missions. They denounced Sunday-schools, temperance societies, and all efforts that aimed to give a better education to our ministry.

The history of this sad division among our fathers is too well known to need recital here. We rejoice to know that it has well-nigh passed away. Our church polity allows to every church absolute independence. Therefore, as our churches grew more enlightened, one by one, or in groups, they became missionaries and without a shock transferred themselves from the one body to the other. This process is still going on, and the Georgia Baptists are rapidly becoming again one people.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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CONCLUSION OF THE REMINISCENCES PUBLISHED BETWEEN THE DATES, AUGUST 13, 1896, AND JULY 29, 1897.

[A BRIEF NOTICE OF MANY GREAT NAMES.]

THE time has come to close my reminiscences of Georgia Baptists. While engaged in this work, my mind has lingered lovingly upon scenes of my early and middle life. It is to me a matter of thanksgiving to God that I was permitted to share the social friendship, the Christian fellowship, and, in some humble measure, the pious labors of so many great and noble people.

The persons of whom I have written do not exhaust the list of those whom I have known and loved. There are other names full worthy to be remembered for their work's sake. But they have so recently passed away that their lives and their labors are still fresh in the memories of their brethren. For this reason it is hardly needful to write of them now. Twenty years from this time, some one of the contemporaries may be still living who would find it a pleasant and profitable task to furnish the *Index* of that day with reminiscences of his companions during the last three decades of the present century. Such reminiscences, I think, would be far more useful to that generation than they would be to the present generation. And yet I feel reluctant to pass them all by entirely unnoticed. I propose, therefore, to make mention of at least some of them. I will begin with our beloved brother,

*William H. McIntosh.*

His ancestors came from Scotland to Georgia as early as the time of Oglethorpe. McIntosh County was named after one of that family, and in that county our brother was born, in 1811. Were he living now he would be eighty-six years old. He was ordained in 1836, and was a devoted and able minister of the gospel for nearly, if not quite, fifty years. My acquaintance with him began in 1832, in Sunbury, Georgia. He was then a young man, and was preparing himself to go to the seminary in South Carolina, then under the charge of Dr. Samuel Furman. After his ordination he labored first on the seaboard of Georgia about eleven years. He was then called to Eufaula, and afterwards to Marion, in Alabama, in which State he spent many years of his useful life. At length, however, he returned to Georgia, was pastor for several years of the First Baptist church in Macon, and afterwards was appointed by our State Board to hold meetings for the instruction of the colored ministers. He died early in the eighties, crowned with the respect and love of all who knew him.

*Charles Mercer Irvin.*

Here is another brother whose name is known well in Georgia—a household word in perhaps a thousand homes. He was the son of parents who were in easy circumstances and able to give him a good education. And it is said that his pious mother even from his cradle had devoted him to God and prayed that he might become a minister of the gospel. Her prayers were answered, and in his early manhood he was ordained to the ministry. Passing by all the details of

his life history, I would notice only his wonderful ability as a pastor. In this sacred office he had no superior and few equals. His easy and unaffected yet graceful manners, dominated by sincere sympathy and Christian gentleness, qualified him to be a welcome visitor in every household. The rich found in him an equal whom they could honor, and the poor found in him a friend whom they could trust and love. With such qualities he mingled freely with his people. With him his pastoral visits were second only to the claims of the pulpit. Hence he needed no artificial contrivances to draw an audience, for all classes of people loved him, and his public services were well attended. The secret of his success was found in his loving visits to his people. He was often in their homes. His example is one that our living pastors would do well to follow.

*James H. DeVotie.*

Here is another of my own contemporaries. He and I entered the ministry about the same time. It is true he came into Georgia rather late in life, but he stayed with us long enough to become identified with our people. There were very few better preachers than Brother DeVotie. He soon won the admiration and love of his Georgia brethren, and they delighted to honor him. My acquaintance with him began in 1837, and our relations to each other were of the most pleasant character. After holding several important pastorates, he was at length made corresponding secretary of our State Board of Missions, which position he held, I think, till his death. His faithful labors in that work were of great value to many destitute localities. It is but a few years since he fell asleep.

*Charles H. Stillwell.*

Here is still another preacher who in the order of time may be grouped with McIntosh, Irwin, Mell, DeVotie and myself. Brother Stillwell, however, was a little older than any of the group mentioned. He was born in 1806, and ordained in 1837. He labored with great faithfulness in the ministry for about fifty years. He filled many pastorates. Among these, perhaps the most important one was his pastorate of the First Baptist church of Rome. Brother Stillwell was a most excellent man and devoted Christian and an earnest preacher. I was his successor at Rome, in 1856, but his membership remained with the church which he had so long served. This gave me an opportunity to know him intimately. I learned to love him, and I think I loved him with a feeling that was different from any mere human affection. I loved him because I could see Jesus in him. He was not a rich or learned man, and yet the "bright and morning star" shined through his life with its mild splendor upon the moral darkness around him. If such a thing be possible here on earth, he was one who had already washed his robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

*The Mercer Men.*

Passing by for want of space many precious names, I propose to notice a few (I can only mention a few) Mercer men. I remember W. D. Atkinson, John Green, J. G. Ryals, W. L. Kilpatrick, William H. Davis, E. A. Steed, Earle, H. H. Tucker, J. F. Dagg, F. M. Swanson, G. R. McCall, Moses McCall, Samuel Burney, and perhaps several others. These were

all at Penfield during my connection with the college. Doctor Tucker and Rev. J. F. Dagg were there as theological students, having graduated elsewhere before they came. Brother Earle and Brother Swanson were also only theological students. The others were in the literary department.

As we look at the names above recorded, it is sad to think that they have all passed away. But it is a great comfort to know that they all lived to do a good work before the Master called them. Mercer has sent out from her halls many ministers, and those who still survive may find in the lives of their departed comrades an inspiration to intensify their zeal. Some of the group lived to be old men. Doctor Tucker was perhaps the oldest. All are acquainted with his brilliant career and his noble character. He was first a student, then a professor, and then the president of Mercer University, and afterwards chancellor of the State University, all in one lifetime. But, after all, his best work was the book he left behind him. His book, "The Old Theology Restated," is indeed a rich legacy to his brethren in Georgia.

Brother J. F. Dagg's career, though less conspicuous, was perhaps no less useful. His pure and holy life was a bright example to all who knew him. While his labors as an educator were preparing hundreds of the young for the serious business of life, he was not unmindful to point their way to Jesus and heaven.

*James G. Ryals.*

He graduated with the first honor in the class of 1851. While in college he was not a member of the church, but his correct and upright deportment commanded the respect of the faculty and of his fellow

students. In a few years, however, he was baptized and soon became a preacher. He was pastor of several churches in Bartow County. He was an able and learned preacher, and was a man of great force of character, and hence wielded wide influence among his brethren. He was finally elected to the chair of theology in his own alma mater. This position he held with distinguished ability till his health failed. He passed away in the midst of his usefulness and of his wide-spread popularity.

*E. A. Steed.*

Here we have another distinguished member of the class of 1851. Like Brother Ryals, he did not join the church till after he graduated. He was a bright young man, stood high in his class, and was a pleasant, genial companion. Not long after he graduated he was baptized and finally was ordained. He served several churches in Columbia, his native county, till he was made a professor in Mercer University, which post he filled with distinction till he died.

*W. L. Kilpatrick.*

Doctor Kilpatrick was a church member while in college, and he was in sympathy with all the pious students. His standing in his class was high, and he graduated with the first honor. His work was chiefly within the bounds of the Hephzibah and adjacent associations. He rose to eminence as a preacher and a pastor, his labors extending through nearly forty years. He was for a long time president of Mercer's Board of Trustees, and few men had, at the time of his death, a stronger hold upon his brethren than he. His recent death filled all our hearts with sorrow.



*W. H. Davis.*

Brother Davis and Doctor Kilpatrick were in college together, and in their subsequent lives they were not separated. They worked together for years on the same field. Brother Davis was an able preacher and a successful pastor. He died several years before his friend and brother.

I wish I had space to notice every one in the group above mentioned. I loved them all, and especially those that were for a time under my own instruction. Indeed, I rejoice in having had some part in the training of such men as Ryals, Kilpatrick, and all the rest of the noble dead who were in my class.

I now propose to speak of some Mercer men of earlier date. As early as 1833 or 1834, young men were at Mercer Institute preparing for the ministry. Many of them, I hope, are still living. Of those that have died I will mention a few names.

*T. U. Wilkes.*

This brother was one of the first to receive his preparation for the ministry at the Mercer Institute. He entered as early as 1833 or 1834. His first work after leaving the Institute was to serve as missionary in the Central Association. He afterwards was pastor of the churches in Eatonton, Social Circle, and Atlanta. As a preacher he was earnest and persuasive. He was successful in strengthening and building up his churches, and his brethren esteemed him highly for his work's sake. In 1861 he removed with his family to Arkansas, where he lived and labored with great zeal until his death, which occurred when he was about fifty-four years of age.

*William Clay Wilkes.*

This brother graduated at Mercer University in 1843. He was, I think, a near relative of Rev. T. U. Wilkes. His father, with his family, came into Georgia in 1829, when William was about ten years old, and settled in Eatonton. There the lad grew up to be a young man. In 1838, when about nineteen years old, he was baptized by Dr. J. E. Dawson. In telling his experience, he is reported as dating his conversion in his early boyhood when only seven years of age. From that time he led a life of prayer, and he would pray in public, sometimes, before he was baptized. He was early impressed with a belief that he ought to preach. To this end, he was anxious to obtain an education, and finally was able to graduate. His life was a very useful one, both as a minister of the gospel and as an educator. He presided sixteen years, with great success, over Monroe Female College. He founded, afterwards Spalding Seminary, near Montezuma, Georgia, and still later, the Georgia Baptist College at Gainesville. While thus doing so much as an educator, he was not unmindful of his ministerial work. He was teaching and serving churches in every section where he lived. These labors he continued till his death. For usefulness his life was a success.

*I. R. Branham.*

Brother Branham was the grandson of Deacon Thomas Cooper, of whom I have written. He was for a time a student of Mercer University, and was baptized at Penfield. He graduated, however, at Emory College, in 1847. But he held firmly to his Baptist faith and became a successful teacher and an able

minister. His private life was most lovely. He continued nearly forty years in active service. At length his deafness and painful bodily afflictions compelled him to give up regular work. He lived with his daughter and his son-in-law, Prof. Charles Lane, the last few years of his life, which ended, I think, in the summer of 1896. All who knew him loved him.

*Sylvanus Landrum.*

Brother Landrum graduated at Mercer University in 1846. In October of the same year he was ordained to the ministry, and in the beginning of the following year, 1847, he became the pastor of the Baptist church in Athens. From that time commenced his life work, and he adhered to it with a fidelity and zeal that well deserved the admiration of his brethren.

Brother Landrum's life was signalized by great success in all his fields of labor. His people loved him and his churches grew in numbers and in usefulness. But though his life was crowned with brilliant success, it was not without its shadows. He was called to pass through waters of deep affliction. His first wife lived with him only four years, and then she was taken home to the heavenly mansions. I knew her well. She was Miss Naomi Lumpkin. She graduated at the Girls' High School at Penfield in 1845, while I was its principal.

His second wife was Miss Eliza J. Warren, daughter of General Eli Warren, of Perry, Georgia. She too, proved to be pre-eminently a helpmeet for her noble husband. Years passed on. Five sons and a daughter gave to their home a happy family. But in the year 1878, the dread demon of the swamp—yellow fever—invaded Memphis. Brother Landrum was then

pastor of the Central Baptist church of that city. Thousands fled to escape the epidemic. Brother Landrum would not leave his people at a time when more than all other times they would need the consolation he might be able to give them. The older sons might have escaped, but they would not leave their father, nor would the noble wife forsake her husband. So they all heroically stood their ground amidst the fearful ravages of the plague. The result was that our Brother Landrum was bereaved of his two older sons in the bloom of their young manhood, while he himself and, if I mistake not, his wife also were stricken with the same dangerous malady. True, they recovered, but they recovered to weep over their lost loved ones.

Brother Landrum lived to return, for a time, to his beloved people in Savannah. But his last pastorate was with the Coliseum Baptist church in New Orleans. It was not long before he passed away. His wife still survives him, and is now living with her son, Dr. W. W. Landrum, pastor of the First Baptist church, Atlanta.

It seemed to me to be appropriate thus to mention, even briefly, Mercer's sainted dead, for while they lived they honored their alma mater.

There are scores of brethren whom I hold in remembrance but for whom I have not found room. I would like to tell the story of Rev. V. R. Thornton. Wild in his youth, a trophy of divine grace in his early manhood, and through life a noble preacher, he was identified with the fathers in all their works. Then I could speak of the beloved Warren, whose praise is in all the churches, and whose name is an inspiration to all surviving preachers who have had the privilege of

knowing him. I also call to mind our brother H. C. Hornady still fresh in the memory of our Atlanta brethren, and so dearly loved by all who knew him. Nor can I forget Brother G. F. Cooper and Brother Thomas Muse, who were for so many years as beacon-lights over all Southwestern Georgia.

## CHAPTER XV.

### REMINISCENCES NOT INCLUDED IN THE FOREGOING SERIES.

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#### SECTION ONE.

#### MERRILL P. CALLAWAY.

BROTHER Callaway died on the 27th of October, 1897, nearly three months after I had closed my reminiscences of Georgia Baptists. Hence his name does not appear in those articles. But his long and useful life deserves to be remembered.

He was born in Wilkes County, Georgia, on the 23d of April, 1814. He was therefore eighty-three years, five months, and four days old at the time of his death. His father was Mr. Isaac Callaway. His mother was a Miss Barnett, and he was connected also with the Toombs family. These were all prominent citizens of Wilkes County.

Brother Callaway was baptized in early life by Rev. Enoch Callaway, pastor of Sardis church for many years of his useful life. It was not very long after Brother Callaway's baptism before he became interested in the religious movements of the denomination. In due time he married his first wife, and they not long afterwards made Washington their place of residence. A reminiscence of Mr. Callaway would be incomplete if it did not include also a reminiscence of his noble wife; for they were one, not only by the ties

of wedlock, but also by the ties of Christian fellowship in religious work.

She was the daughter of Isaiah Tucker Irvin, and sister of Rev. C. M. Irvin and of Hon. Isaiah T. Irvin (named after his father), who was the speaker of the House of Representatives when the war broke out. It may be well to notice that he had decided to enter the Confederate army. But before he could do so, he went to Texas to arrange some important business in which he was interested. While in Texas, having occasion to cross one of its rivers, by some mischance he was drowned, and thus his services were lost to his country. I well remember when the news of his untimely death came to Georgia and what a gloom of sorrow it occasioned among his kindred and his admirers.

Mrs. Callaway was educated at Powellton, under the instruction of Rev. Otis Smith, who afterwards was president for a short time of Mercer University. She was baptized by Rev. Enoch Callaway into Sardis church, Wilkes county. I learn from her son, who, of course, obtained the information from his mother, that when she was baptized the ice had to be broken before she was led down into the water. Such experiences, in those early days when baptistries were unknown, were frequent among our northern churches, and sometimes occurred as far south as Savannah. The fact is worthy of notice, as illustrating the fidelity of our people to what they believed to be the teachings of the Bible. The young lady was ready and willing to go through the ice as she followed the footsteps of the Savior.

Her first husband was Mr. Jno. S. Walton, a mem-



ber of a prominent family in Wilkes County, and a kinsman of Hon. Robert Walton and Hon. George Walton—the latter one of the signers of the declaration of American independence.

Mr. Walton, however, died early and left his young wife with several small children. She subsequently married our brother, M. P. Callaway, and then commenced their united lives.

Not very long after their marriage I became acquainted with them, during a meeting of the State Convention, or of the Georgia Association (I can not remember which it was), held in Washington, Wilkes County. I shared their hospitality and began an acquaintance which continued as long as they lived. Brother Callaway frequently attended our various religious convocations, in all which he took an earnest interest and thus became well known to his Baptist brethren far and wide through the State.

Some time before the war he opened a large plantation in Mitchell County, about ten miles from Albany, on the road that leads to Thomasville. There he settled his family, surrounded with all that was needed to make a residence in the country not only comfortable but attractive. He named his place "Cottage Home." The house was, indeed, a cottage as to its style, but in its structure, its amplitude, and its finish, it was a convenient and handsome residence. The furniture was in keeping with the house, exhibiting nothing ostentatious or extravagant, but reflecting everywhere the taste and refinement of its intelligent mistress. Here lived Brother M. P. Callaway and his wife, ever ready to dispense with pleasure a generous hospitality. That household might be taken as a fair sample of

thousands of others that graced the old plantations where dwelt the rural population of the South in the days before the war.

But after all, the crowning beauty of the family was its piety. The father and mother were earnest Christians. They loved the house of God, were regular in attendance upon its services, and were liberal contributors to all its expenses. During the stormy years of 1864 and 1865, I was their pastor, living near the church to which they belonged. I thus had an opportunity to know them as church members. I shall never forget the manifold kindnesses which I and my family received at their hands. Religion was no exotic in their house. If I remember rightly, all the children of the family whom I knew at that time were members of the church. And those of them who are still living I trust are trying to follow their parents in lives of piety and in works of mercy.

Mrs. Callaway was in every sense a lady. Intelligent, cultured and refined, she was qualified to shine in the highest walks of worldly and fashionable life. Brother Callaway with his clear head, prudence and good judgment, with his wide knowledge of the world, could also have been conspicuous in what is called fashionable society. And then had he and his wife preferred to be identified thus with the world, they had ample means to indulge such a wish. But content with a home abundantly comfortable, and sufficiently ornate to satisfy a rational taste for the beautiful, they preferred the companionship of those with whom in Christian fellowship they could share the "pleasures of piety."

Thus these two people lived till death separated

them. Near the close of 1881, Mrs. Callaway was called to her heavenly home. Her graceful form shall be seen and her words of welcome be heard no more in the halls of "Cottage Home," but the memory of her virtues will, I hope, shed a beam of light along the pathway of her surviving loved ones.

Brother Callaway married a second wife, but I had not the pleasure of her acquaintance and therefore am not able to give any reminiscences of her. She also has passed away.

During the last fifteen years or more of Brother Callaway's life, I met him only a few times and know but little of the incidents of that period. But I have learned that he continued his charities as long as he lived. How much he may have contributed from first to last for benevolent objects will never be known in this world. One munificent gift has recently come to my knowledge. That was a gift of \$500 at one time to the Seminary at Louisville.

Well, he rests from his labors, and his works shall follow him. May God bless his surviving children.

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SECTION TWO.

"THE CHRISTIAN INDEX."

(Published April 27, 1899.)

The service which the *Christian Index* has accomplished for the Baptists of Georgia deserves to be put on record. The present generation can hardly appreciate it, for the simple reason that most of the Baptists now living became acquainted with the *Index* at a period when it had already accomplished a large part of its work. They see the work, but they do not

know how much of it is due to the power and influence of that paper.

My memory reaches back to an earlier date. I can remember when the *Index* was called *The Columbian Star*. It had its origin in 1821, in the city of Washington, D. C. In a few years, however, it was removed to Philadelphia, and was edited by the elder William T. Brantley, who was a giant Baptist, and for several years was pastor of the Baptist church in Augusta, Georgia. Under his management, the *Columbian Star* became a most excellent paper. My mother was a subscriber for it, and though I was myself too young to appreciate it I remember well how she loved it and with what pleasure she welcomed its weekly visits.

At the time above mentioned, I doubt if there were twenty thousand white Baptists in all the State, and very few of these could claim any mental culture much beyond the range of a common-school education. Nor were the preachers, as a rule, much advanced in culture above their people. It was night over all our Baptist Zion in Georgia, with only here and there a star to relieve its darkness.

The reality of this darkness is shown by other facts. Sunday-schools were almost unknown. The few that existed were found in cities and in towns as union schools, open to all denominations, and in no sense regarded as institutions of the churches. I doubt if there was a Baptist Sunday-school in any church in Georgia prior to 1830, except perhaps in Savannah, Sunbury and Augusta. Again, the cause of missions, especially of foreign missions, was just beginning to attract the attention of Georgia Baptists. The con-

tributions were very meagre, probably not more than one thousand or, possibly, one thousand and five hundred per annum for the whole State. And as to the temperance reform, that had not dawned. Egg-nogs before breakfast and toddies before dinner were frequent in all homes, and church members and their preachers often indulged in such beverages. The cause of education, also, was in a very low condition. It is true some interest was manifested in it from the beginning of the century, but the efforts made in its behalf came to nothing.

But at length, Dr. Jesse Mercer bought the *Columbian Star*—the *Christian Index*—and planted it near his own home in Washington, Georgia, and became its editor. This was the dawn of a brighter era for our Baptist denomination. The subscribers, though few, were some of the best and most intelligent of our people. They were able to appreciate the teachings of the *Index*, to imbibe its spirit and to adopt its suggestions. And then they were able to give to all with whom they associated their own impressions concerning the aims of the paper, and thus its influence was felt far beyond the limits of the subscription-list. That influence was manifested in many ways.

It stood for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. It came into the State when the denomination was rent with divisions. Some held the "doctrines of grace" to such a degree that they became practically antinomians, and went so far as to declare non-fellowship with all the benevolent enterprises in which their brethren were engaged. The *Index*, without compromising or impairing the doctrines of grace, became the champion of every benevolent and pious work.

I have already alluded to the meagre contributions for missions during the twenties. They were very small. In the year 1834 the Georgia Baptist Convention met at Shiloh Church, in Greene County. I was there for the first time, as a member of that venerable body. Many of the Baptist fathers were on hand. Doctor Mercer was moderator. The *Index* had been in Georgia only about five or six years. When the subject of missions was reached, a brother moved that the Convention should pledge itself to raise for the ensuing year for missions the sum of three thousand dollars. After an interesting debate, the resolution was adopted. The amount pledged was at least double, perhaps three times, what had ever before been contributed directly for missions in one year by Georgia Baptists. Now, I risk nothing in claiming that it was the *Index* which, by the grace of God, had done most to raise our people to so high an advance upon their earlier contributions.

From the time just referred to, the paper has continued its fostering care of missions till the contributions for them have reached sometimes as much as sixty thousand dollars in a single year. Indeed I am not sure that I have not understated the amount. Of course, this increase of contributions is, in part, due to the natural increase of our people in numbers. But the *Index* must be regarded, under God, the most effective factor in the case. It should be remembered that mere numbers are of little avail for any of the great works of piety unless the people are well informed in regard to such works. It was the *Index* that gave to our constantly increasing membership the information that was needed to call forth their enthusiasm in behalf of our various missions.

Another protege of the *Christian Index* has been Mercer University. When the Convention above referred to met at Shiloh in 1834, the Mercer Institute was only three years old. In 1838 it was elevated to the rank of a university. From the beginning, the *Index* took it under its fostering care, and has never ceased to plead its cause before our Baptist people. Knowing as I do the struggles through which it has passed, I feel very sure that, without the aid of such an advocate as the *Index* proved to be, Mercer University would never have reached its present high position.

After the *Index* was planted in Georgia, it was not long before it became a champion of temperance. Dr. Charles D. Mallary, of sainted memory, wrote many columns in its behalf. He adopted the form of allegory. Personifying whisky under the name and title of "King Alcohol," he proceeded to describe a protracted war between the said king and certain parties (representing the temperance people) who were seeking to dethrone him and to set free his enslaved subjects. The allegory was well sustained and widely read. It was continued through many numbers of the *Index*. There is no doubt of the influence which that noble paper has exerted in bringing Georgia Baptists into harmony with the great temperance movement.

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SECTION THREE.

"THE CHRISTIAN INDEX."

(Published May 25, 1899.)

I have received an interesting letter from a venerable brother, who, like myself, knew the *Columbian Star* when he was a boy. We are very nearly the



same age. He is one of the few survivors of the first generation of Georgia Baptists who lived and labored for the Master during the early decades of the century. I allude to Brother Thomas J. Davis, who still lingers in his eighty-ninth year at his home near Cave Spring, Georgia.

Brother Davis tells us that before Doctor Mallary's articles were published, as early as 1827, it was a group of Baptists that formed the first organized temperance society that was ever established in Georgia. Here I will give an extract from his letter:

"I want to call your attention to the first move in the temperance reform in Georgia. It originated in the breast of my father. It was inspired in him by reading the *Columbian Star*. As you say, the *Index* has been one of the prime movers in the temperance reform. I claim that it (the reform) originated in the heart of a Baptist, from the reading of the *Columbian Star*. My father became strongly inspired with the subject. In consultation with Rev. Jeremiah Reeves, who was then pastor of father's church (the Academy), they met at a church near by, Walnut Fork, Jackson County, on the 4th of July, 1827, and formed what was called 'The Jackson County Anti-intemperance Society.' That was the first organized society made in Georgia. Jeremiah Reeves was made president; my father, Joseph Davis, secretary; John Willis, Joseph J. Pollard and John J. Pollard, managers—all members of a Baptist church. My father wrote the constitution. Females were invited to become members. It (the society) increased very rapidly."

Such is Brother Davis's account of the organization of the first temperance society in Georgia. Brother

Davis further informs us that very soon the Methodists and Presbyterians in the county united with them and the society became a power in the community. In a little while it had a thousand members. Thus the little seed dropped in 1827 by the *Columbian Star* into the "prepared ground" of Deacon Davis's heart, and faithfully nurtured afterwards by the same paper under a new name and management, has developed into a great tree that well deserves to be called a tree of life, which, even now, under the law of "local option," has spread its benign and protecting branches over nearly a hundred counties of our grand old commonwealth. And we are looking and hoping that it will continue to grow till its fruit of "local option" shall ripen into the perfection of absolute "prohibition," which shall stand as a protection against all the poisonous drugs that the emissaries of King Alcohol may seek to circulate among our people. We rejoice to know that the orthodox religious papers of other denominations are with the *Index* in its efforts to accomplish this grand result.

I did not know the history of the "Jackson County Anti-intemperance Society" till I received Brother Davis's letter. But his letter brought to my remembrance an incident in my own life which I had almost forgotten. I can not say how long a time passed since I had thought of the incident, but his letter brought it to my recollection. I was made to remember that I myself was once present at a meeting of that very society of which Brother Davis speaks. It must have been about ten years after its organization. The meeting to which I allude was held in Jefferson, Jackson County. I had been serving for some time a country church

called Cabin Creek, six miles from Jefferson. This service had made me acquainted with many people in Jackson County. So, when the great temperance society held its annual meeting that year, I had the pleasure of being on hand. But, as stated above, I had almost forgotten it, so far, indeed, that even after I remembered the meeting, I was able to recall but very little of what was done. In my reply to Brother Davis's first letter, I called his attention to that meeting. In his reply, he again refreshed my memory. He mentions as present on that occasion, Rev. Jeremiah Reeves, as still the president of the society, and his father, Deacon Joseph Davis, as still the acting secretary. By that time, however, the society had greatly increased. It then had two vice-presidents, one a Presbyterian, whose name was Rev. J. McAlpin, and the other a Methodist, Rev. J. W. Glenn. Dr. J. R. Grant, a Presbyterian, was corresponding secretary. These were the officers at the meeting referred to.

It was customary at the annual meetings of that society to admit visitors from neighboring counties. How many visitors were present at that time I do not know, but Rev. Anselm Anthony was one and I was another.

Now let it not be forgotten that the chief value of this reminiscence is to enable us, the Baptists of Georgia, to appreciate as we ought the influence of the *Christian Index* in giving a start to the great temperance movement in our native State. Brother T. J. Davis informs us that its very first manifestation was made by his father under the teachings of the *Columbian Star*, the same paper that is now the *Christian Index*.

It is interesting, also, to notice that the beginning of

this movement was made on the 4th of July. This could hardly have been an accidental coincidence. In 1827, the Fourth of July was an anniversary that truly excited the patriotic enthusiasm of our whole country. It was celebrated at that time not only with the tones of the human voice, which were powerless to express the emotions of the nation's heart, but they invoked the help of the trumpet's wild blast, of the bugle's far-reaching and melodious sounds. Nor were these sufficient. No, it required the deep thunders of ten thousand cannon, replying to one another across the continent, to express the joy which the nation felt for its deliverance from political bondage to a foreign power.

Now it was a Fourth of July, while the people generally were celebrating the anniversary of their political freedom, that a little group of Baptists gathered at a country meeting-house and then and there put forth a "declaration of independence" against a tyrant far more cruel and oppressive than any political ruler could ever be.

PART SECOND.



## THE STORY OF SHALER GRANBY HILLYER,

BY HIS DAUGHTER, LOUISA C. HILLYER.

My father, Shaler Granby Hillyer, was born in Wilkes County, Georgia, June 20, 1809. His father, Shaler Hillyer, came to Georgia when a young man, from the town of Granby, Connecticut. Shaler Hillyer married Rebecca Freeman, the only child of John Freeman, a prosperous planter and an old soldier of the Revolution, who lived on the banks of Broad River in Wilkes County. Here in the homestead, which they called Poplar Grove, my father, his two older brothers, one younger brother and one little sister were born, and here they spent their childhood days. It was a happy home, governed by kind and wise parents.

My father's younger brother died when three years old, and his sister at the age of seven. His affectionate heart always held them in fond remembrance, and not long before his own death he was telling me of some childish reminiscence of his little brother.

When we were children, our father would take me on one knee and my sister on the other and tell us stories of his sister, our "Aunt Harriet." She became to us the embodiment of all childish virtues embalmed in everlasting innocence and beauty. As an illustration of her unselfishness, he told how, while she was convalescing from a spell of sickness he would take her to ride in her little wagon, which he, "playing horse," drew after him. When she had ridden thus for a while, she would say: "Now, brother, you must get



in and let me draw the wagon." He remonstrated, saying that she was too little and weak to pull him. But she could not be satisfied, and he finally humored her. He was careful not to put his weight on the wagon, but pushed with his feet on the ground. Meanwhile she was delighted with the thought that she was giving him a ride.

This is one of the many tender recollections of the gentle little sister, whom they all loved so dearly. Her infant life surely performed its mission in making more loving and sensitive the hearts of the three older brothers, who were to live on and on through many years and face the rough and hardening world, each in his own way. When they were old men and sometimes met to talk of other days, the little sister who left them so long ago was the theme of many a touching story.

My father's parents were both well-educated people, and were anxious for their children to have school advantages. Unfortunately these were hard to secure in that rural community, and so, at a tender age, the children had to be sent from home. The two older brothers, John and Junius, were sent to a boarding-school some miles away, and even "little Granby," at the age of seven, was sent to an old-field school, where he boarded with the teacher from Monday morning until Friday afternoon. Then one of the servants, or a member of the family, would come for him and carry him home. I have heard him tell of this little school—how he had but one book, which he kept lying on the bench by his side till such time as the teacher would call him up to "spell his lesson"; how he would sit and doze and wish for Friday evening. One of the larger

girls of the school was very kind to him, and would let him put his head on her lap and go to sleep. One Friday afternoon, when he was anxiously waiting the close of school, who should ride up to the schoolhouse door but his own beloved mother? He exclaimed aloud, breaking suddenly the silence of the room: "There's ma!" and then his unbounded happiness almost made up to him for the home-sickness of the week. After some polite formalities between the lady and the teacher, the happy little boy climbed up behind his mother, for she was on horseback, and they joyfully rode away. Meantime the two brothers, respectively nine and eleven years of age, were still further from home, under the tutelage of a very severe and cruel teacher, who so intimidated his pupils that they were afraid to report his unjust treatment. But time brought its changes, and not long after the incident above related they all returned home and other plans were made for their instruction. My father told of the return of his brothers on one occasion, which was probably their final return from the school above described. They were expected on a certain day, and when he saw the carriage in the distance, he ran to meet it. The driver stopped and let him get inside with his brothers. They seemed to be overjoyed to see him. They said, "Why, here is little Granby." They hugged him and petted him. He had not realized that they would be so glad to see him and their affectionate greeting made him very happy.

My uncle, Junius Hillyer, writing of those times, says of my father: "And a still further change which our return from Skipwith's School brought upon our social life at home was the advent upon the scene

of our dear little brother, Granby. He was then seven years old—still a child—yet he could keep up . . . he could understand, and though he could not make a trap or set a hook, yet he could go with us and help us in our trapping and fishing. In 1816, it was Brother John, Granby, and myself. . . . Our lives have flowed on down the stream of time together, in harmony and in sympathy. What has concerned one has concerned the other. We have had our boyish sports and our school-day labors and trials. We have read and learned together and improved our minds and enlarged the field of thought. We have prayed together and tried to serve God; and we have rejoiced together in the hopes and consolations of our religion. . . . We began life together, together we have gone through it, and now, in our old age, we may have the assurance that we will together go out of it.”

The little story told by my father, and the above quotation from the annals of the family, written by my uncle for the pleasure of his children, go to show the tender affection that existed between the three brothers, and such was the influence of the one over the other that the stories of their early lives are closely interwoven. They loved to tell their children of the scenes on the old plantation, of the free country life and its invigorating pleasures, with enough of work to make them strong and active boys.

But a sad change came in the death of their father. He was a prosperous business man, a kind husband, and an affectionate father, and he had the respect and esteem of all who knew him. When a little more than forty years old, in the midst of his work, he died. He had just assumed some very heavy obligations, and

when his affairs were settled his wife and children were left with only a fragment of their once comfortable fortune. The grandmother still had a small property, and with her help arrangements were made to move to Athens where the boys might be educated. Their father's death took place March 12, 1820, and it was during the following summer that they lost their beloved little sister. Their mother—then a woman of thirty-four—bereft of her husband, her two babies and her fortune, sad at heart, had to begin life anew. The sublime Christian faith and courage she possessed is well shown in the sequel. She still had her noble mother with her, and how much that grandmother was to those three boys they bore witness, by word and deed, throughout their long lives. The old plantation home was given up and a small farm purchased near Athens, where the family settled and where they enjoyed the products of the farm while at the same time the boys were able to secure the educational advantages of the town. Here they met the usual experiences of grammar school and college, play-ground and recitation-room. They had their pleasures and their trials, and they made their friends—some of them lifelong.

The little farm was a mile from the college and my father said he walked that mile several times a day; first, to early prayers and a recitation, and back to breakfast; again to one or more recitations and back to dinner; another recitation and home to supper. At night he went to his little attic room and conned his lessons for the next day. There were very few helps in those days, and not even a Greek-English lexicon, but the Greek words were translated into Latin, and

the Latin had to be translated by the student. One help he had in his mother. She was not a Latin scholar, but when he had read his lesson as he thought correctly, he would sit by her side and read it to her. If she pronounced his translation to be clear and correct English, he felt satisfied with his work; but if she found it obscure, he applied himself again to conquer the difficulty. Thus throughout his college course he found in his mother his dearest sympathizer and helper, and it was greatly owing to his readings with her of the best English classics that he acquired that rhetorical finish in reading for which he was afterwards distinguished.

All who knew my father will agree that modesty was a marked trait of his character. It is possible that this might have served to throw him into absolute obscurity had not a very lofty aim to accomplish some good in the world and a noble desire to serve others, joined to an indomitable industry and perseverance, enabled him to overcome that failing, which, like most of his failings, "leaned to virtue's side." He used to tell this story on himself: When he began his career in the debating society at college, he could not succeed in filling out the three minutes allotted to him; but, overcome by the dignity of the occasion and the august assembly of young Demostheneans, his carefully prepared arguments would escape him, and he would bring his discourse to an untimely end. His brother Junius, who had been in the society for a year and was already regarded as one of the ablest debaters, was mortified at the beginning my father had made, and one day, in conversation with a classmate and very intimate friend, he said, "What shall I do with Granby? Ought

I not to advise him to give up trying to speak?" This friend replied, "No, you let Granby alone. He is bashful now, but he is going to make a speaker." This advice was followed and it was not long before "Granby" not only filled out his allotted time for debate, but he took high rank as debater and orator. Some of those who remember to have heard the old man preach for an hour, and then seem reluctant to leave the theme with which his heart was all aflame, may smile incredulously at the story of the timid boy who struggled to fill three minutes.

In the year 1829 my father graduated. His college course had been a great success. While he did not receive an honor, technically so called, he graduated with distinction. He ranked among the best and brightest of a very talented class. He had the unqualified approbation of his preceptors, and he was the joy and pride of his family.

Two months later he one day received an invitation from Doctor Waddell, the president of the college, to come to his room, as he had something of importance to communicate. Upon my father's arrival the Doctor showed him a letter from a gentleman, Col. Robert Gamble, who lived in Florida, and who wished to employ a tutor in his family. He asked Doctor Waddell to recommend some young man for the position. After my father had learned the object of the letter, the Doctor said, "Now, Granby, if you desire this position, it is yours, for I will suggest your name at once to Colonel Gamble." The offer was accepted, and the confidence in him that his old teacher showed was a gratification to my father all his life.

Soon his preparations were made to take what was

then a very long journey—from Athens to Florida. Col. Robert Gamble lived some twenty-five miles east of Tallahassee. It was considered a fortunate circumstance that a prominent business man, Mr. Williams, was about to move from the town of Eatonton to Tallahassee. He was a friend of the family and my father's brother John, that same year, married Mary Williams, the niece of this man. He was the father of Doctor William Williams, whom my father succeeded as professor of theology in Mercer University, and who so long occupied the chair of systematic theology in the Baptist Seminary at Greenville, South Carolina. Mr. Williams was glad to have my father join him as an additional protection to his wagons. He was a banker, and his purpose was to establish a bank in Tallahassee. Among his other goods he carried bags of gold amounting to sixty thousand dollars. This treasure he and the young men with him had to guard; but so quiet and peaceful was the country that they had little fear of molestation and carried the gold in safety to the end of their journey.

My father spent one year in Colonel Gamble's house and he always seemed to recall that year with pleasure. His host was a gallant gentleman and treated the young tutor with consistent courtesy, as did the whole family. It was there he gained his first experience in teaching, and in his leisure hours he studied law, for he expected to follow that profession. But it was the teaching and not the law that was to be of service to him in after years. He was not at this time a professor of religion. His mother, writing to him of the religious condition of the town of Athens, and expressing an earnest desire for the outpouring of the Spirit,



says: "And that you too, my precious Granby, may be taught speedily to feel the meltings of divine grace is the fervent prayer of your affectionate mother, R. Hillyer."

In November, 1830, my father returned to his home near Athens and continued his legal studies in the office of his elder brother, Junius Hillyer, and in August, 1831, was admitted to the bar. But in the meantime he had joined the Baptist church and had occasionally spoken in public at religious meetings, and thus his attention began to be drawn towards the ministry. It so happened that just then he was invited to become the principal of the academy at Sunbury, on the seaboard of Georgia. The result was that the young lawyer, owing to the condition of his finances, deemed it best to defer his entrance upon his chosen profession for a year or two. Accordingly he accepted the invitation and took charge of the school in Sunbury. The village of Sunbury was noted for the moral and social elevation of its inhabitants. The principal was not only a young teacher, but was also a young Christian, and needed just such surroundings to give a right direction to his religious growth.

His next engagement was a position in the Girls' High School in Athens. This he held during the year 1833. In November of that year he was elected tutor in his alma mater. This position he held through 1834. During these several years his mind was exercised on his growing inclination for the ministry. It was in Sunbury, in 1832, that he preached his first sermon, and on his return to Athens he engaged in religious work, in church meetings, prayer-meetings, and Sunday-schools.

On August 16, 1835, Shaler Granby Hillyer was regularly ordained to the Baptist ministry. No man then knew what this meant to the people of Georgia, and eternity alone will reveal what it has been, but that it was of profound importance none can doubt. He was called to ordination by the church at Cabin Creek, Jackson County, and Reuben Thornton, Jeremiah Reeves, Phillip Mathews, and Benjamin Brown formed the Presbytery. The following year, 1836, he was pastor of Cabin Creek church.

And now came the question of his secular work, for the preachers of that day did not rely upon the churches for their support. He believed that he could more successfully and harmoniously combine the professions of a teacher and a preacher than those of a lawyer and a preacher. He therefore renounced the bar and continued his labors as an educator in connection with the more important work of the ministry. Within these two fields of labor he spent the greater part of his professional life, and he soon grew into prominence both as teacher and preacher.

In the former capacity he seemed to be in advance of his age in one thing, at least. He ruled chiefly by gentle measures. The age under which he was raised was dominated by the extreme application of the maxim, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," and a method of severe discipline was in vogue in many of the schools in Georgia, while he was pursuing a different one. Not that he fell into the other extreme of too great mildness. The rod with him was a reserve force to be applied at the proper time, and he had need to resort to it less often as he gained in experience. He attached his pupils to him, and after that it was com-

paratively easy to govern; but he had a firm mouth, an aquiline nose, and, on occasion, a flashing eye that made the culprit beware. I have given my own recollection of him in the schoolroom, and I believe his many pupils, who are scattered over this State from the mountains to the sea, will bear me out in this description.

There are many testimonials to my father's success and power as a preacher. When I first began to listen intelligently to his sermons, I was about nine years old. I came to look upon him as a model of grace and eloquence and the most perfect exponent of Christian doctrine and practice. One marked characteristic of his sermons was the careful and logical analysis which enabled the hearer to retain his line of thought in memory; and he was often gratified by the assurance that such and such a sermon, preached by him so many years ago, was still remembered with pleasure. The text and analysis as well as vivid illustrations were clear and distinct in memory.

While teaching in Sunbury, there was among his pupils a lovely girl, Elizabeth Thompson, daughter of a fine old seaboard family. A few years after, on a visit to Sunbury, he found this girl grown to womanhood, beautiful and accomplished, fulfilling all the promise of her earlier years. He wooed and won her and in December, 1836, they were married. He took his bride to Athens where he was principal of the Male Academy and also pastor of the Baptist church. This seems to have been his second pastorate, and he evidently made a good impression, for some years later he was called to that church a second time. I received a short time ago a letter from one of his friends of those

days, who says, "I knew your father from the time he was first pastor at Athens and I loved him."

In 1838 he became pastor of the church in Milledgeville and this connection continued for six years. Four years of this time he was also principal of the Scottsboro Female College, and resided at Scottsboro. For two years of the time he served the Macon church one Sunday in each month. I once read an old letter written to his mother at this period. I can not recall the exact words, but in substance he thus wrote of his domestic life: "My dear Elizabeth is queen in our little home. Sam [the colored man] attends to the garden and the cow; Lily [the cook] is supreme in the kitchen, and poor little Augusta [the cook's daughter] is everybody's drudge. When I come home from school I cut up the wood, which gives me good exercise; and in the twilight Elizabeth plays and sings for me at her piano."

Four sweet children were added to this happy home; but alas! the first-born, a dear little girl, her father's pride and joy, was taken from him, when she was learning to talk and developing those entrancing baby ways that lead captive all hearts, and tempt a parent to idolatry.

When I was a child, one evening at family prayer, after my mother and older sisters had sung the hymn, "Oh, for a closer walk with God," our father said: "My children, I wish to tell you of an experience I had in connection with that song. While your little sister, Susan, my first-born, was living, on one occasion I was listening to the singing of that hymn, and when I heard those words,

'The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from thy throne,  
And worship only thee,'

my heart sank. I said, 'Suppose my little girl should be demanded of me. Could I consent to give her up? Could I say, "Thy will be done?" Am I making an idol of her?' I do not know how well my poor heart was able to answer those questions, but ere long the message came, and I had to give up my darling. I have sometimes thought, perhaps I was loving my baby too much, and so the good and wise Father took her to himself that he might draw her parent's heart away from earth to heaven."

Once when I was looking over some papers with my father, I found in his desk a little morocco jewel-case, and, on opening it, a lock of baby hair. He said "That is little Susan's hair, my mother put it in that casket and brought it to me when Susan died." I was assorting my father's papers when he had passed away. I found again that little case with the lock of yellow hair. Nearly sixty years he had kept it. He raised eleven children, and he often quoted with a loving smile, as he looked round upon us, "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full;" but he never forgot his first-born.

On June 11, 1843, in her little home near Athens, my father's mother, Rebecca Hillyer, died. She had labored, loved and served. She lived to see all three of her sons good and useful men, prosperous in their work and happy in their families. What her death meant to them and to her devoted mother may well be imagined. I can not dwell upon the scene, but one thing I must

tell. Shortly before she died, none but my father present with her, she told him of a small sum which she had and which she wished him to give to the Mission Board of the Georgia Baptist Convention as a permanent fund, the interest to be applied to the foreign mission work. In the settlement of her little affairs he found that a portion of the fund which she designated could not be thus applied, but as far as possible he carried out her wishes. He placed about two hundred and sixty dollars in the hands of the Board, and it was recorded under the simple name, "Foreign Mission Fund." I have been told that the interest on that fund furnishes fifteen dollars and sixty cents annually to Foreign Missions. By a recent act of the Convention the name was changed to "Rebecca Hillyer Foreign Mission Fund."

In the fall of 1844 my father was elected to the position of principal of the Female School at Penfield, but held the position only one term. He lost his wife during that term, and his own health was so poor that he was obliged to give up all work for a time. He sent his children to their maternal grandmother in Liberty County, and he spent several months in travel for the restoration of his health. I have heard him say that during that period he was very despondent as to his recovery, and had little hope of living another year. It was at some Baptist gathering he was appointed to preach the opening sermon for the next annual meeting. He said to himself, "My alternate will have to preach that sermon, for I shall not be here." But contrary to his forebodings the following year, 1846, found him restored to health, and he served the Madison church, and for a second time the Athens church.

In the summer of 1845 he had been elected to the chair of rhetoric in Mercer University, with the understanding that he was to enter upon his duties as soon as the financial condition of the college might authorize it. This occurred in 1847. His work included rhetoric, intellectual philosophy and moral science. Under the head of rhetoric it became his duty also to train the students in composition and elocution. His success was very marked. Mercer became famous for her fine speakers, who rendered the commencements popular and celebrated all over the State.

Before entering upon these duties he had married his second wife, Miss Elizabeth Dagg, daughter of Dr. J. L. Dagg, president of the University. Educated at her father's side, she had become an intellectual woman, and a fit companion for my father in all his literary work. She is the interpretation to my mind of the word "mother." Her love was deep and tender and strong, but it did not cloud her judgment. She sustained my father in the government of his house, acting with cool decision and calm temper. She took into her big heart the motherless three whom my father brought her, and with unfeigned love did a true mother's part by them. Two of her own babies sleep in the old cemetery at Penfield, and eight of us live to "call her blessed."

The intellectual life at Mercer was a joy and delight to my father. He ever gladly remembered his association there with some of the greatest minds of the State. Doctors Dagg, Mell, Sanford, Tucker, Wise, Crawford, Willet—all were kindred spirits. Some of these he has commemorated in his writings, and he regarded them all as choice companions. It was while he was at



Mercer, in 1850, that the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by that institution.

My father's grandmother, Mrs. Freeman, had become lame from a fall, and, being very old, she was obliged some time before her death to give up going to public services. I suppose that even getting in and out of a carriage was painful to her. But one day, for some reason, my father was specially anxious for her to attend the exercises at the college chapel, and he said, "Grandmother, I wish you would let two of the negro men carry you in your chair to the chapel. I believe you can go in that way with comfort." She agreed to this, and so the little town of Penfield was treated to the strange sight of something like an oriental palanquin. Perhaps it is on this occasion she is reported as saying that it was the proudest day of her life when she sat in the audience and saw her three grandsons on the rostrum among the good and great of the land—John as an honored guest, Junius as a trustee of the University, and Granby as a member of the faculty. She felt that her work had not been in vain. Her own youthful days had fallen upon Revolutionary times, and her schooling had been neglected, but she knew the value of learning for her boys and had made many sacrifices for their sakes. She died in 1855, at the age of eighty-nine, surrounded by those who loved and revered her and ever honored her memory.

Soon after his grandmother's death, my father, having received a call to the Baptist church at Rome, moved his family and servants to a farm he had bought three miles from that town, on the Oostanaula River. He named the home Lindisfarn from a sort of romantic application of Miss Porter's novel, "The

Pastor's Fireside." In addition to his pastoral work and the farm work, in which, however, he had the assistance of an overseer, he established a home school for young ladies, and soon all the available space in his house was filled. He received also from the neighborhood, as day pupils, both boys and girls. It seemed that to him "Labor was life." And I must say a word here about my father as a slave-owner. At that period he owned about twenty slaves—a small number for those times. Although his professional work so engaged his attention that he was, as a general thing, obliged to have the help of an overseer, he did not neglect the physical comfort nor the moral instruction of his slaves. They lived in their cabins ranged upon the edge of his back yard, where he could care for them in sickness or trouble, and where he could by his mere presence restrain boisterous conduct and prevent quarreling and disorder. It was his custom to have family prayer in the dining-room, immediately after supper, before the children were too sleepy to give heed. On such occasions he invited—not compelled—the servants to come in. As a rule they appeared to enjoy the exercises, and there seemed no reluctance to comply with his wishes. At other times when they assembled in some one of their own cabins to hold religious services, as they were fond of doing, they were very proud to have "Master" come out and give them a talk or lead in prayer; and he in his turn greatly enjoyed their hearty singing. In the many changes he afterwards made he could not always have his negroes so close to him, but he was ever mindful of their moral and religious instruction.

In 1859 the trustees of Mercer called my father to

fill the chair of theology. This position he accepted, and so the "Pastor's Fireside" at Lindisfarn was deserted. He held the position of professor of theology until the exercises of the college were suspended in 1862 on account of the war.

At the breaking out of the war in 1861 his two oldest sons were on the eve of graduation. They had both done well and were regarded as young men of ability and promise, and their father was very proud of them. The elder, Shaler, had taken the first prize for declamation, and Lorraine, the younger, was now a candidate for the first honor. They were fired with the martial spirit of the times and eager for the fray, but their father restrained them from enlisting, until they had received their diplomas. My brother Lorraine was an earnest student, and both teachers and classmates testified to his superior gifts of mind; but as the time approached for dividing the honors, and he felt somewhat uncertain as to what the decision of the faculty would be, his father said to him, "My son, it matters not how the honors may be bestowed, I want you to know that your father is satisfied with your college course. You have done your duty." Lorraine looked up with a bright smile and said, "Well, father, if you are satisfied, I am content, and I shall feel anxious no longer." But to the joy of both and to many others he won the first honor.

Lorraine filled his father's heart with the sweet and restful love of approbation, that feels no regret, that is pained by no misgivings. Language can not express the pride and joy and hope he had in this son. But native sweetness of character alone would not have satisfied my father. He believed that every heart needs

the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, and great was his joy when it became his privilege to lead this beloved son into the baptismal water.

Shortly after their graduation, Shaler and Lorraine both joined the army; and, as I have said, the college was suspended in 1862, and my father took his family again to Lindisfarn, which place he still retained and, while at Mercer, had entrusted to the overseer.

My father was industrious, cautious, prudent, economical. By these traits and also by the assistance of a small inheritance, he had at the beginning of the war a modest property, which with his salary was sufficient to provide comfortably for his family and educate his children and leave something for his old age. For many reasons that seemed proper to him at the time, he sold his plantation in the fall of 1862, made an engagement to take charge of the Hearn School at Cave Spring, and bought a farm near that place on which to put his negroes.

It was in July, 1863, while he was living in Cave Spring, the dreadful news came that his son Lorraine was mortally wounded. The letter announcing this was handed to him while he was engaged in the school-room. He dismissed school, and with anxious heart began to employ every means possible to learn something more definite. At first he could hear from no one who had seen Lorraine die or who had seen him after he was dead. He was left wounded on the field and had fallen into the hands of the enemy. It must be explained that the older brother was not near him at this time, and could not even go to the scene of his death. Lorraine was in Virginia and his brother, whose

health had failed some time before, had been transferred from the Army of Virginia to a post in Georgia. The anxious suspense of those days no pen can depict. When at last the facts were known they were as follows: General Wright's brigade, to which Lorraine belonged, was detailed to guard the pass at Manassas Gap, on the retreat from Gettysburg, and in a little encounter there with the enemy he was wounded. His rank was that of first lieutenant but he was acting in the place of captain at the time. The enemy gained the field, and carried him with some of their own wounded to a farm-house near by, where he died in a few hours. The most substantial information came from the farmer, Mr. Hansborough, and there could be no reasonable doubt that the young officer whom he described was Lorraine, and yet because there was not positive demonstration of his identity (the war had closed before all the circumstances of his death were learned), my poor father would cling, at times, to a faint hope that his precious boy might yet return; that perhaps he had been carried to a northern prison instead of to the farmhouse.

The death of Lorraine was a very crushing blow to my father and to all the family, and very especially to his elder brother, for they had been constant companions from infancy and were devoted to each other. In speaking of this sorrow, my father said that for some time he felt unable to bear it. He tried not to rebel, but his grief was so overwhelming that he could not regain that calmness of spirit which Christian faith and trust ought to bring. One day he heard a sermon delivered by a brother preacher that comforted his heart and made him willing to give up his loved one

into the hands of the Lord. With genuine submission he said, "Thy will be done," and a load of grief was rolled from his soul, and he could look up and smile, and feeling perfect assurance that his dear child was with his Savior, he took up again his work for the little brothers and sisters who were yet to tread life's stony way. It was no contradiction of this experience that when, after the war, the soldiers were coming home and he heard of so many unexpected returns of those thought to be lost, hope sprang up again, and his anxious eye scanned the passing groups of war-worn travelers, and he came to watch for the stage that daily passed the door. Each time he sadly turned away, knowing he had no just cause for the disappointment he felt.

In the same summer that Lorraine died, 1863, the Hearn School was very much disorganized by the call for young recruits, and though it had during the preceding term admitted girls as well as boys, the leaving of so many young men, and the constant excitement of the community caused by rumors of the approaching enemy, conspired to render steady and peaceful work almost impossible. Added to this my mother's health had become very feeble, and my father was anxious to take her to some quiet retreat where she might rest secure from such alarms. Accordingly he once more sold his farm and this time bought in Mitchell County, twelve miles below Albany, on the then stage line to Thomasville. For a short interval, while preparations were made, and while the trade was unsettled, he sent his family to his Penfield house. This was the last sojourn at Penfield and that home he afterwards sold. I believe a portion of the depreciated currency received

for that property was on his hands when Lee surrendered.

The new home, like most of its neighbors, was a double log cabin, with wide open hall between, and two weatherboarded shed-rooms at the back. My father soon put up a wing at each rear corner, consisting of one large room, built also of logs. Thus there were six rooms, which for our family was rather crowded, but we became accustomed to the inconvenience, and we were very happy there in spite of the anxieties and privations growing out of the war. In the same spirit of romance in which he had named the other home Lindisfarn, my father called this Ravenswood, the ravens being represented by the flocks of crows that cawed in the tops of the old pine deadenings. While living in this retirement, my father was pastor of the country church near by, and also taught a neighborhood school. One object he had in this was to educate his children. Their schooling went on with little interruption throughout the four years, that is, of those who were of school age.

When the war closed, and the negroes were set free, a Southwest-Georgia plantation with its gin-house, barns, cabins, etc., represented the bulk of my father's fortune. He adapted himself as best he could to the new conditions, made a contract with his former slaves to work the land, and so struggled on through 1866. At the end of that year he again sold out, went to Forsyth and took charge of the Monroe College in order to educate his five daughters. This step he said he never regretted. The work he accomplished in the next twelve or fourteen years was something marvelous. When he moved to Forsyth he had eight children



to educate. His oldest daughter was married, and his oldest son had graduated in 1861. The other eight were still dependent and he was fifty-seven years old—an age at which many men wish to rest. He was pastor of the church as well as president of the college. When he finished his day's work in the school-room, he spent the latter part of the afternoon in pastoral visiting. There were no street-cars and he had no conveyance, but he was always a good walker. He preached twice on Sunday, held prayer-meeting on Wednesday night, performed the marriage ceremonies, visited the sick, and buried the dead. In short, he met all the obligations of a pastor, while filling with untiring industry and unquestioned ability and success his position in the college.

On the 31st of January, 1870, we lost our beloved mother. I can not describe the sorrow of a motherless home. Most people have felt it, or will feel it in time. Her death came upon us as a sudden and painful shock. For eighteen months or two years her health had so greatly improved that she and my father were encouraged to believe that she would entirely recover. She was beginning to resume little tasks that she had for several years been obliged to lay aside. She was happy in her plans for her husband and children, and in the care of her father, who was then living with us. But the message came, and she was ready to go. Dr. William T. Brantly, writing of her death, said: "Like Enoch she walked with God, and though her translation was not so miraculous as was his, we believe that it was as certain and as glorious."

Through all our lives our mother had taught us to revere our father. I believe no two parents ever more

fully agreed upon principles of government in rearing their children. Our mother had taught us to acquiesce without question in what our father did; that we might feel sure of his doing right. He so verified this by every word and deed that when after a time he told us of his intention to marry again, there was not one rebellious word uttered, and though we wept in silence—for motherless children must weep—we remembered what she had taught us of respect and loyalty to our father, and we gave our dutiful and even cheerful consent to his wishes.

The new mother had been Mrs. Lawton, widow of William Lawton and daughter of Dr. Samuel Furman, of South Carolina. She was a refined and cultured lady, and she not only won the hearts of her stepchildren, but of the whole community, by her sweet and gentle manners which yet only half revealed her deeply affectionate and sympathetic nature.

In 1872 my father resigned the presidency of the college and accepted a subordinate position so as to give more time to the church. In 1880 he was president again, but retained the position only about eighteen months. Advancing age and failing strength convinced him that he was no longer able to carry on the burden of the two professions. One must be relinquished. Therefore in the summer of 1881 he concluded to close his labors as an educator and devote his life to the ministry, so long as God should give him strength to perform its duties. His daughters had all left school, some were married and the others self-supporting; and this was an additional reason for giving up the school-room.

In 1881 he was called to be pastor of the Baptist

church in Washington, Wilkes County, Georgia. Back then to his native county he went to spend, as he probably thought, his last days. For six years he served that church and a more happy relation between pastor and people could scarcely be imagined. While there, he was largely instrumental in the erection of a neat and substantial church building. In this his wife was a great help to him, as she was in all his pastoral labor. She went with him to see the poor and the sick, and she showed the most earnest zeal in Christian work. The last summer of this pastorate closed with a very interesting revival of religion, which was ever after a comfort and joy to remember.

My father wrote out in full very few of his sermons; but it was his habit to record in small note-books the texts and analyses, giving usually the date and place of preaching. Sometimes he recorded pastoral visits, or mentioned some attendant circumstance. He left a number of these books, going back as far as the year 1848. In the book kept in Washington, in the year 1886, is a record of the sermon he preached on June the 20th. On the next page he notes the death of his brother Junius, on June 21, with the following touching tribute: "This was a sad day to me. At nine A. M. a telegram from Decatur informed me that my beloved brother, Junius, was dead. At about half past eleven my sympathizing Dorothea and I started to Decatur. We found a weeping family. The burial service was next day conducted by Doctor McDonald of Atlanta. My brother was in childhood my playmate; in youth, my companion; in manhood, my friend; and through all my life my faithful counselor and loved brother. I wish my children to cherish his

memory and love his children. God grant that we may all meet in Heaven."

In December, 1886, my father's devoted wife, our honored stepmother, died. This was a very severe blow to him. He had scarcely thought she would go before he did. He was eleven years her senior and he naturally hoped to have her companionship as long as he lived. How little can man foresee what is to befall him! She cheered and comforted him for fifteen years. She left him, and he lived thirteen years without her. We mourned her loss for ourselves as well as for our father. She had been always kind, loving, and considerate, and there was never a ripple of discord between us.

After her death it became my blessed privilege to have the care of my father. How my heart bled for him in his affliction. For thirteen years I watched over him and tried to give him all the comfort I could. I have sometimes thought that for those thirteen years I was born. In them was a lifetime of hope, joy, anxiety, love and devotion. In them was a volume of instruction and all the philosophy of life. The *cui bono* of discontent, the unrest of doubt could find no dwelling place in the light of that godly life.

When I brought my father from Washington to live with me, I was living with my cousins in Decatur and teaching in Atlanta. He resigned his pastorate in Washington, to take effect as soon as the church could secure another pastor; but he served them once or twice a month until the summer of 1887, and at the same time he served the churches at Macedonia and Clarkston. Thus in his affliction, and living under the threat of blindness and the burden of nearly seventy-

eight years, he continued with indefatigable industry to work. Enforced idleness seemed to be his especial dread.

Before he left Washington his eyes were beginning to fail, but for eight or ten months longer he could see to read and write; then the shadow deepened so that he could no longer read, and he wrote by means of a little machine which guided the lines for him. At last when the right eye was fully ready for operation we had the cataract removed. I remember well it was the Christmas of 1889. We had left my cousins' kind and pleasant home, where I had lived so long, to live with my sister Mary, Mrs. Janes, who had recently made her home in Atlanta. My father had always relied greatly on this daughter. She was the child of his youth, and in her girlhood she was the sunshine of his home. It was a kind Providence that permitted him to pass his last days under her roof.

The time of our moving had special reference to the operation for cataract. It was performed by Dr. A. W. Calhoun on Saturday morning, the 23d of December. The orders of the doctor were that the patient should be kept very still for a week or more, and any sudden or rough movement might be fatal. The following Monday, though Christmas Day, was sad for Atlanta. It was Henry Grady's funeral day. The streets were very quiet and the mayor gave orders that no popping of firecrackers nor other noisy sports should be indulged in. On Tuesday night, however, the restriction was withdrawn, and the children were daring the usual perils attendant upon such pleasures. A gay crowd was gathered on the piazza of our house, and one little boy had a large box of firecrackers to

ignite at once. The danger of approaching the powder made it hard to control the fire, and soon the woodwork of the piazza had caught. For a moment there was great excitement. I was in my father's room and I heard the confusion but he did not seem to notice it. My first thought was, "What if father should be disturbed?" To move him might be fatal to his eye, and a false alarm could as certainly produce this result as the real fire. My anxiety was intense as I heard running to and fro through the hall, and calls for water, and I dared not arouse father unnecessarily. But as I stepped out to see what the danger was, I heard the welcome words, "It's out! it's out!" Oh, how thankful I felt! and father had been well some time before he heard the story.

And the operation was successful. Oh, the joy of restored sight! Who can describe it? My father's delight had in it the simplicity and pathos of a little child. It was very trying to one of his energy to keep quiet so long with the bandages on his eye, and the first time they were removed he called us in to look at him and rejoice with him, and he was doubly happy when he found that he could read. As I have said, it was the right eye that was thus restored. The other, though itself nearly gone, was not ready for the operation, and the doctor's advice was not to operate on it, unless the first should in time fail. But it did not. It lighted him through the rest of his journey—eleven years—and by its aid he wrote the "Reminiscences" and much more besides.

True, his sight was imperfect, and he had difficulty in seeing at a distance, and the dimness seemed to increase during the last few years of his life, but he

could see to read and write, and this was of the first importance to him.

My father continued his charge of the Clarkston church until the fall of 1892, when he gave it up on account of his growing infirmities. This was his last pastorate; he was then in his eighty-fourth year. He continued to preach by special invitation, but his chief work henceforth was in his contributions to the *Index*. During the busiest part of his life he wrote occasionally both for the *Index* and the *Religious Herald*. From 1874 to 1878 he was an editorial contributor to the *Index*, and also at several other periods. During the last ten or twelve years of his life he was almost a constant writer for that paper. In 1897 he brought out his "Bible Morality," a book designed to teach young people the fundamental principles of morality based upon the doctrines of the Bible. The language is clear and simple, while the truths inculcated are rich and profound.

In the space of a few pages, I am trying to tell the story of ninety years. It must be that what is left untold is the greater part. In spite of the bereavements that I have described, my father's life was a happy one. These sad events were far apart in time, though near together in the record, and he met them with Christian faith and hope. He often called himself a happy man and recounted his blessings. Though not robust in appearance, he enjoyed good health, and was unusually exempt from physical suffering. He was happy in his family, and in his long life he made many friends. He was often encouraged by the results of his labors in both the schoolroom and the pulpit; and he enjoyed, to the last, his intellectual pursuits.



There were two things that specially contributed to his pleasure during his last years—letters and visits from his friends and relatives and children. Soon after the death of his brother, Judge Junius Hillyer, he was comforted by a visit from his elder brother, Dr. John F. Hillyer, of Texas. This was their last meeting, but for seven years longer they were able to hear from each other. The elder brother lived to be nearly eighty-nine and died December 12, 1893. I give an extract from one of his letters written May 5, 1889. It shows us a glimpse of the mind and heart of the writer and the faithful love of the brothers: "Granby, I am old. I have been in many storms in life and have fought many hard battles. I know life's trials—pain in body and anguish in spirit; but the warm and tender sympathies of joy and love are living in me yet, foreshadowing the blessings of Eternal Life. And this brings up another thought. In our correspondence we often express the yearning desire to spend the last remaining fragment of our lives together. This earnest longing has been, with me, sometimes painfully intense. The good and beneficent God has largely endowed our minds with the constructive faculty. By it we can reconstruct the scenes of the past and re-enact the long drama of life.

'Fond memory brings the light  
Of other days around us.'

And thus for a while we can live together in the past. Presently the drama will end and the curtain will drop. And when it rises, our astonished souls will be transported with bliss, as we look upon the sublime glories of the infinite God, the divine perfection of the blessed Jesus, and the limitless fields where the Holy Spirit

has wrought out in infinite perfection his grand conception of the universe of God."

Sometimes on my return from school, my father would show me with marked pleasure a letter he had received from some one of his readers, congratulating him on an article he had written; or from some old friend, calling up pleasant associations. Another time he was happy in the news that one of the "children" was coming to see him. He would say, "Junius will be here this afternoon," or, "Fanny is coming next week," and so on, through the list. Then he would count the time, and quite in advance of the appointed hour he would take his place near the front door and watch for every car that passed. I know the happy gatherings we had in his room will make memory sweeter to each one of those loving hearts. They had to return to their homes and their duties, but "father's fireside" was the family center.

At the close of one of the articles written for the *Index* in June, 1899, my father mentioned that he would reach his ninetieth birthday on the 20th of that month. To our surprise, we read in the *Atlanta Journal* of Monday evening the 19th, that the pastors of the city would call on Doctor Hillyer in a body the next afternoon at five o'clock. This had been agreed upon at their conference in the morning. My father was greatly pleased at the prospect of the visit, and talked much of it in anticipation. Next morning there was delivered at our house a large and handsome arm-chair, presented by the pastors as a birthday gift. If they could have seen his face lighted with a happy smile of pleasure at this testimony of their brotherly love, they would have needed no word of thanks.

When they gathered in the evening he sat in the chair while they offered to him their assurances of love and reverence and expressions of appreciation of his good and useful life.

My father replied to it all in his own touching and simple style. One thought he expressed was something like this: The pleasure he felt in the presence of his brethren reminded him that all through his life he had been greatly blessed with just such companionship, and he quoted, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts." Then he went back to the days of his early ministry, when he was instructed and strengthened by those wise men older than himself; and he called the long roll of honor, Mercer, Sherwood, Mallary, Dagg—then his contemporaries in the pulpit and his colleagues at Mercer, and so through life he gloried in the companionship of good men. Another thought I quote from memory: "Too often we withhold our gifts until it is too late to give comfort or pleasure to the one for whom they are intended. You have not waited till I am dead to bring your flowers to my tomb; but you have anticipated my burial and brought your gifts of love so that I might enjoy them."

After they had sung and prayed and shaken hands in true Christian love, the brethren went away and the happy evening passed; but the memory of that meeting was a joy to my father for the remaining eight months of his life.

Ah, those eight months! How little we knew, yet how well we ought to have known that every moment was golden. How were we able to do anything but sit at his feet and learn of his wisdom? We plodded

along as usual, working our daily tasks and seeking our worldly interests, sometimes turning aside to rest with him for awhile. Perhaps it was better so—the wise Father knew it all.

About three weeks before his death, he went with my brother to Marietta, to preach the funeral sermon of one of his old Scottsboro pupils, Mrs. Meals. Of this sermon Rev. W. A. Wadsworth, in an article published in the *Index* of March 29, 1900, thus writes: "It was my privilege to hear the last sermon of Dr. Shaler Hillyer, who so recently passed to his eternal reward. The occasion was most beautiful and touching. Before the chancel in our Baptist church was the casket which held the remains of Mrs. Julia Meals, who, after a long and useful life, had fallen asleep in her seventy-sixth year. Facing the audience stood the able and venerable man of God, in his ninety-first year, to speak in tender accents of the many virtues of his former pupil and friend, whom he had baptized, received into the church and at whose marriage he had officiated. It was a scene to be witnessed but once in a lifetime. The pathos of it melted the audience to tears. In a clear, strong voice, but full of sweetness, he announced the text: 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

"The message, in perfect harmony with the occasion, was more than a eulogy of the dead. Under his graphic touch came out the picture of the contrast of a life planned for this world in the gratification of the flesh, with the higher spiritual life which looked to the glorious and heavenly tabernacle 'made without

hands.' The appeal to forsake the folly of the one and enter into the safety, joy and exaltation of the other, was more than eloquent—it quivered with the power of an anointing from heaven. Strong men in the audience, some of them without God, were mightily stirred. The old veteran of the cross was faithful to his commission to the last. Could we have known that it was his final appeal as an ambassador of the King, the sentiment and impression of the hour would have reached a climax indeed.

“The softening and uplifting influence of that last sermon will abide with me through all the years. Though a minister of another denomination, I desire, as an expression of my personal indebtedness, to lay one modest flower upon his grave, and while deploring the loss to his denomination and the world of so great and faithful a preacher, to rejoice with his brethren over the assurance that with triumph he has entered into ‘the building of God’ on high.”

I think it was the day after his return from Marietta (he was gone about two days), I put my arms around his neck and said, “Father, I did miss you so much while you were gone.” I believe that in the tender embrace he gave me, he expressed his pity for his poor child who was so soon to miss him—always.

How distinctly I remember his last days with us, yet they were uneventful days. We took a short walk, I think it was Thursday afternoon, to a little store near by. On his return he measured the distance by his steps and made it just five hundred yards to our door. Friday evening it began to turn cold, and Saturday was a very cold day. He was writing all the morning, and I remonstrated with him for fear he

could not keep warm while trying to write. Finally, early in the afternoon, he laid aside his pen and we sat and talked together for a while. How little we thought he had laid aside that pen forever. In the evening I read to him for some time, then put more cover on his bed and bade him good night.

On the morrow—ah, that sad morrow! I found him unconscious. He could not be roused, and we never heard his loved voice again. The “children” came, but they missed his tender greeting. This time he was not watching for the cars. On the next morning, Monday, February 19, 1900, he breathed his last.

He lies buried in Forsyth, where he labored so long and faithfully among a faithful people.

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O kind friends, who read this story, bear with me if my language fails! I would fain proclaim to all the world the sweetness of the majesty, and the beauty of the lowliness of one whose ideal of majesty and beauty was found in the character of his meek and lowly Savior.

I know there are many hearts in Georgia that are bound by ties of strong affection to the memory of my beloved father. One knew him as pastor, another as teacher, another as friend. One says, “He first led me to Christ”; another, “He first persuaded me to preach the gospel.” One remembers a sermon, another a kind word. One received a letter when in sorrow; another a smile of congratulation in good fortune. Ah! I thank you and love you all for your affection towards him. You knew him and believed in him as a Christian, a scholar, and a sympathizing friend. For sixty-five years he was a moral and religious

power in Georgia. His clear and earnest voice was heard in your assemblies, always for right and truth, for the glory of God and the coming of his kingdom. Vast throngs were stirred by his eloquence, and the souls of men were moved to repentance.

In the place where his children knew him, in his home life as husband, father, and in the olden time as "master," his virtues shone unrivaled. His consistently courteous manner, his patience under trials, his strong and gentle firmness in discipline, his intolerance of falsehood and deception, his searching eye and gentle hand, combined to produce a wholesome fear mingled with that love that "casteth out fear."

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And now, dear Father, farewell! I have followed your noble life from infancy to your last hour. As I read and reread the articles written by your beautiful hands—for

"Beautiful hands are they that do  
Deeds that are noble, good and true"—

again I was with you in your little room on South Pryor street. I saw you in your great chair by the fire thinking your wise and pure thoughts. Ah! you wist not that your face shone. Oh, that beautiful face—for

"Beautiful faces are they that wear  
The light of a gentle spirit there."

Again you knelt with me and claimed for me, unworthy, the promise given to dutiful children. Again the "good night, darling" sounds in my ear. And one unconscious night that last farewell was spoken, and—"He giveth his beloved sleep."











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Reminiscences of Georgia  
Baptists.

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